

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2019 with funding from
Kahle/Austin Foundation

THE LETTERS OF ELIZA PIERCE

Edited by Violet M. Macdonald

THE HASLEWOOD BOOKS



T H E
L E T T E R S

of

Eliza Pierce

1751-1775

with

letters from her son Pierce
Joseph Taylor a schoolboy at
ETON

LONDON

Frederick Etchells & Hugh Macdonald

1a Kensington Place W.8

MCMXXVII

Thomas J. Bates Library
1000-1000-1000
PETERBOROUGH, ONTARIO

67 100, 1 28 113 1927

*Of this edition, printed in England by
Richard Clay & Sons, Ltd., 670 num-
bered copies have been issued, of which
75 copies, numbered 1 to 75, have been
printed on Millbourn hand-made paper.*

This is number 115

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
¶ Preface	vii
¶ Eliza Pierce's Correspondent	i
¶ Letters of Eliza Pierce to Thomas Taylor, Esq.	29
¶ Letters of Eliza Pierce after her marriage to Mr. Thos. Taylor	79
¶ Letters of Pierce Joseph Taylor, a boy at Eton	109

The Frontispiece is a reproduction of a drawing A.D. 1781 by JOHN DOWNMAN of PIERCE JOSEPH TAYLOR, then a Captain in the 21st Light Dragoons.

PREFACE

AMONG a heterogeneous collection of family correspondence, deeds, account-books and documents of all sorts, the bulk of the letters here published were found tied together, endorsed and numbered with especial care. They were written before and after her marriage by Elizabeth Pierce, heiress of Yendacott, a property of some importance in the parish of Shobrooke, near Crediton, who about the year 1750 became engaged to my mother's great-great-grandfather, Thomas Taylor, Esq., of Denbury near Ashburton.

Eliza Pierce emerges so clearly from her letters that, in default of his share of the correspondence, I have tried to piece together a portrait of Thomas Taylor from the mass of other material at hand, much of which seems to have been preserved by himself from an interest in his own personality that is as illuminating as the documents themselves.

Thomas Taylor's sister Rebecca married in 1754 my father's great-great-grandfather, Arthur Holdsworth, Esq., of Widdicombe House, above

Torcross, Governor of Dartmouth Castle and owner of a considerable amount of local shipping, and this marriage formed a first link between two families which have remained more or less near neighbours and in close relationship to this day.

West Ogwell House, so long in rebuilding, was sold with the rest of the estate about the year 1870.

The coat of arms used on the binding of this book is taken from the seal, engraved by Pingo the elder for Thomas Taylor about the time of his marriage, with the arms of Eliza Pierce on the central shield.

VIOLET M. MACDONALD.

ELIZA PIERCE'S CORRESPONDENT

IN the year 1735 Joseph Taylor, Esq., of Denbury in Devon, finding the house he had inherited from his father inadequate to his requirements, decided after the fashion of his age to build himself a better one, and on the 10th of April made this entry in a diary: "At half an hour after 10 in the morning T. T. aged about 7 years laid the first stone of the foundation of the new house at Denbury in the South East angle of the house."

T. T. was his eldest and dearly loved child Thomas, adored for his sprightliness and good humour, and specially cherished for the frailty of his constitution in early life. This frailty for some time interfered with his education and he was taken from his first small boarding-school in the neighbourhood to live at home again with Joe and Becky, his younger brother and sister; but at the age of eleven, his father having been elected member of Parliament for Ashburton, it was decided to send him to a school in London where he would be within easy reach of the fond parental surveillance. Joseph's old

College friend Bishop Secker of Oxford, consulted in the matter of education generally, had conscientiously passed under review the public schools of the day, but had happily found some objection to them all. "Eaton School is said not to flourish; Winchester is very highly spoken of, but there you will have the opportunity of seeing your Son only en passant. The same objection lies against Bury: which otherwise the Westminster men commend very much." Even Westminster itself, which seemed at first sight so handy, and is in all other points so commendable, is rejected on account of its very situation, as being too near the river for a child suspected of consumptive tendencies. But there is a school at Hackney to which the Bishop has himself that day sent a nephew, "Kept by one Mr. Newcome, an honest, careful, good-tempered man, a layman and a Whig," which he ventures to suggest might meet the case.

The matter being thus admirably settled, on or about the 18th of May 1739 father and son set out, and Joseph, ever as fond and considerate a husband as he is a father, loses no time in supplying his "Dearest Mrs. Taylor" with a graphic description of their journey. Having with no small trouble passed Wilmerton River, they were told at Kilmerton that the waters at

Axminster were unpassable; but after a delay of seven and a half hours “our Honest Coachman return’d to us with a mouthfull of very decent Oaths instead of the Doves Olive Branch and assured us the Waters were abated. We took his Word and entered the Flood; I took my Son on my Lap and with both Doors wide open, that the Torrent might have free Passage, the Water running through more than a Foot deep, we pass’d secure under his Protection who only can protect.” Thomas, in spite of the lengthy journey, with only one break for normal sleep at Salisbury—and that “sore against his good Liking”—is well and in the highest spirits. “In a Quarter of an Hour he was as well acquainted with the Tavern Boys, as with any of his old school-Fellows.”

Mr. Newcome justifies the Bishop’s commendation. “I am very much pleased with him,” says Thomas in a letter to his grandmother, “for I believe he is a very good-tempered man.” “The Boys were about him with all the Familiarity imaginable,” writes Joseph. And Tho. Taylor’s new school-fellows are such that “glad would he have been to have stay’d with them,” but the school is breaking up and will not reassemble till Monday three weeks, until which time Joseph must “patiently bear to nurse.”

Fortunately there are two Bishops and an Archbishop, to say nothing of secular personages, who seem delightedly prepared to relieve him of this care, "and he treats them all alike, blew Ribbons and Lawn Sleeves are no more than his man William. Sure never Country Boy enter'd on such a Scene at once."

"I have lived in some Esteem with my Betters," Joseph had written some years earlier, "and would be willing that my Children should share in the Favour of the Worthy of the next Age," but Tho. Taylor in London is exceeding all expectations. He sets out very familiarly without introducer to dine with the Duchess of Kent, brings titled hostesses back from the theatre to play at halfpenny brag, and sustains conversation unabashed with the assembled dignitaries of the Church. But there is another side to the medal. "Yesterday," writes Joseph on June 21st, "was with me a Day of Tryal beyond what I ever met before. . . . I got up about seven to pack up my Son's worldly Goods . . . but alas! poor Resolution hinder'd finishing. He was quite gay, and follow'd me from Room to Room; I endeavour'd to be out of his Sight. Passion got the Advantage, I wept and lay down. . . ." Hartshorn revives him and they set out for Hackney. "I soon left the Boy,"

says Joseph, "and glad was he to be left." The next day, having finished the packing, he returns to Hackney and finds his son "as happy as a Prime Minister that hath a Parliament of his own, and as well acquainted throughout the House as tho' he had been an Inhabitant seven Years. . . . I staid, till I imagin'd he thought my stay too long. . . ."

To save him the long journeys to and from Devonshire, Thomas had received a standing invitation to spend his holidays with his father's friends the John Talbots in Red Lion Square or with the Bishop of Oxford at Cuddesden, but at Bartholomew-tide he had misgivings lest his father should carry him home after all—misgivings only too apparent to the fond father. "Be assured, Mrs. Taylor, the Boy will never break his Heart from Absence, however you and I may bear it." So to Cuddesden he went, not only for that first Bartholomew-tide, but, it would seem, for most of the vacations of his five years' stay at Hackney. Nor does he appear ever to have tired of its society, though it can have numbered few members whose age at all approached his own save Catherine Talbot, who with her widowed mother formed part of the Bishop's household and had been from babyhood the pet and darling of Joseph Taylor—his

“Nursery” as he called her. Well known in later years in society as an authoress of talent—Richardson consulted her, and submitted the MS. of *Sir Charles Grandison* for her approval—she had even at eighteen a fairly wide knowledge of literature, and by her enthusiasm and sound taste helped to instil into Thomas a love of books that seems to have remained with him through life.

Among the visitors to Cuddesden who must at one time or another have formed part of Thomas's entourage were Bishop Berkeley of Tar Water fame (Kitty Talbot's “dear Bishop of Cloyne”), his father's old friend Dr. Rundle, Bishop of Derry, and Dr. Benson, Bishop of Gloucester; but his best friend, of all these reverend divines, was his host, the genial Bishop of Oxford, whose letters breathe a sweet reasonableness mingled with a sly dose of humour and an occasional pathetic appeal for one of Joseph Taylor's “poor mouldy cheeses” to make his supper upon. Joseph's home-brewed cider, Joseph's cheeses, Joseph's barrels of salted pork from Denbury are for ever going down the Bishop's cellar stairs, as they are down those of most of his acquaintance, for neither the burden of politics nor the agonies of rheumatism can dim his enthusiasm for friendship and philanthropy. In the service of these two his possessions and

his energies are ever ready to be poured forth, and in his dreams of Thomas's future it is some glorious fusion of the like public and private virtues that he hopes for: some beneficent Lord Shaftesbury, could he have foreseen him, would have been his ideal. And Thomas, Kitty assures him, promises as fairly to answer all his wishes as ever sprightly honest-hearted boy did.

Meanwhile Thomas Taylor's own nearest ambition is, at sixteen, to enter the University; and the Bishop, consulted again, looks upon the project with sympathy and understanding. Thomas, he thinks, is as well qualified as the generality of young gentlemen that go to the University, and in any case it may be better to lay hold on his gratitude for being indulged, than to keep him at school a few months longer against his mind. He has informed himself under the seal of discretion of the reputation of the various Colleges, and finds that in general there is as much business done at Exeter College as at any other, nor is there on the whole any reason why Thomas should not be entered there as Gentleman Commoner as his father had been before him.

So to Oxford Thomas is sent, while his less fortunate school-fellows must solace themselves with sending him the latest London news of the

rising in the North and the taking of Carlisle. "Dear Tom . . . for God's Sake fly about and make y^rself famous at Oxford if you know any Scotchmen smoke them consumedly," says John Yorke, whose brother Joseph is aide-de-camp to the Duke of Cumberland and hourly expecting to go into battle.

"I do not complement," wrote Mr. Newcome at parting, "when I tell you that his way of conversing is already much superior to One only quitting School, and his taking leave of me was in a very affectionate and manly manner." And two months later, a little plaintively: ". . . Only delayed my acknowledgement (of a present of cider) . . . in expectation of receiving a letter from Oxford, which Mr. Taylor promised me at taking leave. The settling into a new way of life hath at first so much engaged him, that I can easily imagine that he can excuse himself for want of leisure."

From Joseph's own "small Collection" Thomas is supplied with a first instalment of books, carefully listed, and with good advice and not a little friendly chaff, though here also the plaintive note is to be heard.

"My dear T. T. . . .

We have been Post after Post looking for a Letter from you in Vain. . . ."

“ My dear T. T.

. . . Write more often to,

Dear Boy,

Your most Aff^{te}

Father

JOS: TAYLOR.”

But in 1746, advice, raillery and exhortation cease. “ We have had the satisfaction of hearing by Mr. Talbot,” writes the Bishop to Thomas on May 23rd, “ that you were got down safe after meeting with the afflicting news at Exeter, and that Mrs. Taylor bears her loss in a manner, that justifies the account, which her dearest Friend always gave of her. . . . God make you a Comfort to each other, and direct and assist you under the weight of Affairs, which must needs fall heavy upon you by this unexpected Stroke.”

With the snapping of this thread the story loses some of its continuity, but a letter to his mother from Red Lion Square dated June 2nd, 1748, shows Thomas at twenty not greatly burdened by the weight of affairs. Thanking his mother for her kind invitation to Devonshire, which he will close with when he has seen a little more of the remains of good company that is left in town, he expresses a hope

that the plentiful year she boasts of may produce a more plentiful neighbourhood than usual, otherwise he may be tempted to try the same remedy as last year, a London journey being nothing to him when he is on horseback. "My Prudence," he says, "I hope will permit me to speak to a Girl without being to be married to her immediately, for without the Sight of a Petticoat or two, besides Yours & my Sisters, Devonshire or even M^r Wallers Bermuda's should not be inhabited by me. . . . Not even London itself would relish with me was it not for the Chat of Sukey Hedges or some such sprightly Creature. You see my way of thinking and between you & I, Good Madam, any man that is of another does not act as it was intended he should, tis the only sweetner of life (except Books) at least the only one I know. . . . You are mistaken in thinking he [Mr. Talbot] marries for a fortune, for no friend of mine, Madam, is such a VILLAIN. . . ."

That the neighbourhood proved sufficiently plentiful to retain Thomas in Devonshire for the next few years would appear from Kitty Talbot's letters, in which she commends his settling down to a country mode of life, pictures him with his mother and sister enjoying his book by the fire-side as comfortably as at dear Cuddesden, and

recommends him *The Rambler* as what amuses her twice a week extremely well, with, for more solid reading, Lord Clarendon's History and Mme. de Motteville's and Philippe de Commynes' Memoirs.

The new house at Denbury had been completed under the harassing conditions of a long-drawn-out and vexatious lawsuit concerning Mrs. Taylor's inheritance of the Reynell estate at Oghwell, some three miles distant, and although that was now concluded to the extent of leaving her in undisputed possession, there would appear to have been mortgages and other debts still outstanding. Thomas's ambitions, however, were fired by the sight of a house either dilapidated or not elegant enough to suit his tastes, and like his father before him he decided to rebuild. In an old manuscript record of the Reynell family, dating back to 1557, he singled out a blank page and made this rather portentous entry: "Tho. Taylor 1751 June the 7th. I began to pull down the front of West Oghwell House and on the 24th of the same month (being midsummer day) I laid the first stone of the new Front."

Further light on his motives is shed by a letter from his friend Richard Wynne in July. "I am glad to find your Workmen go on so briskly, and hope to see Oghwell House quite

metamorphos'd by the time I come down. But I shall not look upon it as finished, till it is grac'd with the presence of a certain Lady."

For a petticoat has now come within Thomas's purview whose background of a deer park plus a very pretty fortune suggests no self-accusations of villainy in a suitor, it would appear, though a "polite speech" on the subject to the young lady herself bid fair to engender a quarrel during the course of their protracted engagement. Nor was this the only occasion on which misgivings crossed the heart of the bride elect. Shall he or shall he not sell a part of his estates? asks Thomas, presumably harassed by his growing liabilities, but Eliza Pierce will express no opinion, save the implied one that a man who cannot make up his mind upon his own business is scarcely to be trusted. She dislikes all talk of money and the endless complications of deeds, and refers him entirely to her uncle, than whom, she is inclined to think, she will never find a kinder nor more faithful friend in this life.

The months must have dragged at times a little wearily at Yendacott, chequered by the varying illnesses of uncle and aunt, or sometimes of both together, and the visits of Thomas, who seems ready, whenever permitted, to make the cross-country journey of some fifty miles on

horseback, must have made a welcome break. But Eliza is guarded in her enthusiasm, pretends to find them at times inopportune, and responds only in tones of raillery or of serious philosophizing to his letters, of which not one has been preserved. Did she deliberately burn them all, one wonders, lest she should at some later date have cause to accuse herself of cherishing after all a youthful illusion or two?

Hardly will she confess, after months of confinement in a darkened sick-room, in close attendance on her aunt, that she will on the whole be glad when the last deeds are signed, and Thomas, in her new coach, may carry her away; nor will she even then evince the slightest interest in the coach itself. "As to the colour . . . it is quite indifferent to me," she says.

Thomas, however, who had always an eye for the picturesque elegances of life, we may imagine happily preoccupied with the alternatives of square buckles or round, cloth cushions or leather ones, and highly pleased with a report received from John Talbot, who is supervising the affair for him in London. "The price is to be eighty guineas; but then you are to have no second Bill for Drag-Chains, Drag-Staff, Spring tree-Bars, Box-budget, Coachmans-budget or Coach

seats, and the whole is to be completed by the 24th of next month."

At last, in the early summer of 1752, the new coach carries the young couple away, not, alas, to Ogdenville, where the floors are not yet hung, but to Denbury, where they must keep house with old Mrs. Taylor and her daughter. Thomas's brand-new account-book enables us to follow their route, for it records that wedding bells greeted the bridal pair at High Week, Paignton, Totnes, East and West Ogdenville and Denbury, at a cost of five guineas in all.

From the same account-book it would appear that a great part of the first eighteen months or so of their married life was spent in a round of visits. Eliza must be introduced to Thomas's friends, she must be shown over the neighbouring great houses, she must return from time to time to Yendacott lest her uncle and aunt should feel the separation too keenly. And in the intervals of visits Thomas can always amuse himself by running over to Ogdenville to see how the workmen are getting on. But by and by, Eliza's health having suffered through a carriage accident, and the enthusiasm (and possibly the funds) for building having begun to fail, Kitty Talbot finds occasion for reproof. "I shall be desirous my good Friend," she writes, "to hear of your

resuming your former Exercise and Activity. I am told that you keep late Morning Hours, and instead of following your Workmen up and down their Ladders from Morning till Night, sit still all the live long day and are growing downright Fat and Lazy."

In May 1754 an invitation to Cuddesden is accepted, though with some misgivings apparently on the part of Eliza, who may have cherished in her heart an unacknowledged jealousy of the learned Miss K. T., whom she had always made a show of not accepting quite at Thomas's valuation. But she was received with open arms, and her lingering defences must have gone down before the unreserve of Kitty, who appears to have confided to her the Story of a Heart in which Thomas had never held any place but that of adopted younger brother.

In September of the same year the "little Marmozet" referred to in Catherine's letter saw the light of day and was christened Pierce Joseph after his mother and grandfather, and the cares of a family may now have occupied Thomas for a while; but in the summer of 1757, his sister Rebecca having in the interim married his friend Arthur Holdsworth, the brothers-in-law set out together on what resolved itself into a protracted tour of the country.

Their business at starting was to visit some officer friends of Holdsworth's who were in camp at Dorchester, and from there Thomas rode down to Lyme, the original home of the family, and fell into conversation at the inn with an old man who had known not only his father but his grandfather, Captain Joseph Taylor, who, after taking an active part in the Wars of the Spanish Succession, was on his return to England promoted to a vessel of fifty guns with which he scored successes against the enemy's privateers that earned him the name of King of the Channel. On his retirement from the Navy he settled with his family at Denbury and died there, as his son records, settling his last affairs more like a hero at the head of an army than like a dying man.

From Dorchester they went by easy stages to Southampton, where Thomas had a flash of his father's quick sensitiveness to injustice at the sight of "about a Hundred of the neutral French, as they are called, that have lately been brought by order of the Government from North America that they may not assist the French." But whereas Joseph would have been prompted instantly to appeal by letter to my Lord this and his Grace of that at least to mitigate the hardships of their exile, Thomas reminds himself

in the next sentence that “Prudence however sometimes authorises such Instances of Rigour, notwithstanding they are so very distressing to the Individuals they light on.”

From Southampton they make two excursions to London in pursuit of Holdsworth’s friend Mr. Howe, of whom Holdsworth would beg the governorship of Dartmouth Castle for himself. This accomplished, it would appear successfully, the two friends drop their pretence of business and set out for the North, openly declaring their intention of going as far as the season and the expenses of travel will permit.

They journeyed for the most part on horseback, but from time to time gave their animals a rest and hired a chaise to convey them to some nobleman’s house that they had a curiosity to visit, and of which Thomas immediately felt it incumbent upon him to despatch an exhaustive and (possibly even to their recipient, Dear & Honor’d Madam, his mother) rather exhausting description, in a closely written hand much tangled in flourishes that explains Eliza’s preference of his old writing to the new.

But there are incidents worth recording, as when at Chatsworth they find the inn in which they are dining surrounded by a crowd of five hundred angry miners with clubs and drums,

who are on their way to tell the Duke that they will not serve in the Militia. The Duke, who had two days before ordered the constables to make proper returns, had very prudently absconded at three in the morning, but of this they were unaware. The two travellers, undaunted by the sulky looks of the crowd, ventured out into their midst and reasoned with them, "but very submissively," getting nothing worse for their pains than some foul language "which we very contentedly put up with." The mob then moved on to Chatsworth, where the steward after parleying with them persuaded them to taste his Grace's ale, which had a softening effect. "I confess I should not be surpriz'd from this beginning," says Thomas, "when they are enraged by any future Attempt to carry that ridiculous Act into Execution, to hear that that noble Palace was pull'd down about his Grace's Ears."

How supplies of money reached them is not recorded, but that they occasionally ran short is clear from the delight with which at Ripon they hailed a young officer of Holdsworth's acquaintance, from whom they "rose a small Matter of Cash of which we were at that Time in no small want."

At York they saw the horses being exercised

for the Races and heard jockeys betting to the tune of hundreds of pounds, while they were told that Lord Rockingham had actually made a bet of £7000 not many days before. At Kirk Oswald in Cumberland they visited some old friends who were overjoyed to get news of the West Country, and turning their faces homewards from thence in the rain, were glad of their Oyl Skin Huzzars, “admirable things, that have already saved us two or three wettings.”

Thomas’s next excursion from home has a less pleasing object. Old and new debts on the estate, with the interest piling up, and the vexatious remains of unsettled litigation necessitate his attendance in London, under other conditions a most delightful diversion—were he in a position, for instance, to live on an equality with the friends of his youth—but under the circumstances rather a dismal undertaking.

Eliza has gone with Piercey on a long visit to Yendacott, and of Thomas’s letters we have again only those addressed to his Dearest and Best of Mothers, to whom he recounts the outrageous conduct of his creditors and the marvels of his own economy. Not a farthing for coach or chair hire in a fortnight, though the streets are most horridly dirty, no dining about with his old acquaintance for three shillings a head at

least, but a basin of broth with the mutton-bones that were boiled in it, his drink toast and water, and ten nonpareils for a penny. His only extravagance has been a pair of weepers and two pairs of ruffles, as he finds he has only five shirts with him and must cover up their deficiencies. "I make my Shirts do as well as I can," he says, "but as for my Neckcloths they are horrid bad." This does not prevent him from going to Court of a Sunday, where he has the pleasure of seeing the good old King "very chatty and merry with the two far fam'd Beauties Lady Coventry and the (new married) Dutchess of Hamilton."

He breakfasts with his old friend Geo. Secker, who is married, "and I believe has met with a *Wife*, as well as a friend of his, since we last saw each other." And on April 21st he writes: "Mr. Handel was buried last Night in the Abbey, but the Crowd was so great I could not see the funeral, he has left about 22,000 lb." On the whole he confesses that a London life, and not an expensive one either, is what he seems best suited to. "How different are our Lots generally to our Inclinations!"

Before he was forty the pangs of rheumatism, his hereditary foe, had become acute enough to send him to Bath for relief, and letters from Eliza

addressed to him there do not suggest that the benefit obtained was very great. Piercey was now at school at Ottery St. Mary under the Rev. John Coleridge, father of the poet, and Eliza seems to have spent much of her time at Yendacott, perhaps with the quiet determination that, with the fortune she had brought her husband now entirely out of her control, and Ogwell and Denbury sorely encumbered, she would at least see to it that her own estate was handed down to her son intact and flourishing.

There are many references to business difficulties and differences in these later letters of hers, but she treats them on the whole with a sort of humorous resignation, and gives a witty and affectionate turn to her sentences here and there, that precludes any idea of a serious estrangement, while Piercey, writing from Eton a few years later, relates to each of his parents with equal gusto and abandon the details of the Great Rebellion at the School, and the comical behaviour of Mr. Chichester, begging them to pass his letters on to each other when he is unable to write to both, with not the slightest hint of partisanship or reserve.

Destined at first for the law, Pierce Joseph persuaded his father in 1774 to buy him a cornetcy in the 3rd Dragoons. A calculation of

the expenses of his equipment is scribbled by Thomas on a letter from Pierce concerning the purchase of a horse, and condoling with his father on the death of old Mrs. Taylor. "May it be long," says Pierce, "before I experience such a loss, as you have lately felt!"

Whether any fears for Eliza's health were entertained at that time does not appear, but Pierce's loss followed this letter by little more than a year. Eliza died at Yendacott in 1776, and the entry in the Burial Register of her parish church of Shobrooke runs thus: "M^{rs} Elizth Taylor of Yendacott, Mar: 22nd was buried in Linnen, of which notice was given to me ye 29th inst: & the same day £2: 10. 0 was given by my daughter Lydia to be distributed according to Act of Parliament to the Poor of the Parish. Witness Hen^y Manning Minist^r."

Thomas Taylor was now forty-eight, and the last four years had bereft him of his brother Joseph, sometime Rector of Denbury and Ogwell, his mother and his wife. The change at Denbury must have made itself felt for many years to come, but his life ran on probably in much the same grooves as before. The Recordship of Dartmouth, which he had held since 1764, entailed a good deal of business on him apart from the care of his estates; indeed he seems

to have had official duties taking him constantly not only to Dartmouth but to Exeter and Newton Abbot, and on his journeys to and fro he always contrived to spend a night or two at Widdicombe with the Holdsworths, at Powderham with his cousins the Courtenays or at some other of the many houses where he was sure of a hearty welcome and a large gathering of friends. And at Denbury he returned a good deal of this hospitality, feasting his guests on a "very fine Haunch of powder'd Venison," washed down, no doubt, with the equally fine port and sherry shipped from Lisbon by his brother-in-law.

Then there were the meetings of the Star Cross Club, founded in 1772 by Lord Courtenay and eleven others, the activities of which included an annual Ball, and the Philosophers' Club, which seems to have been a more modest affair. Altogether, life cannot have had many dull moments for one whose chief pleasure had always lain in sociability and change of scene, and who could contentedly fill the credit side of his account-books—otherwise discreetly blank—with elaborate statements of the girth and the timber yield of a giant oak lately felled, or some other picturesque detail of husbandry.

In 1783 he was appointed Gentleman of His Majesty's Privy Chamber, a distinction that

seems to have entailed little on him beyond the possession of a silver key, for he certainly never left Devonshire after this date.

In 1784, the 3rd Dragoons having been disbanded, Pierce Joseph retired on half-pay and settled down to farming at Combe Royal, which he rented for some years, his own estate of Yendacott being no doubt in the hands of a tenant. He had married Charlotte, daughter of Dr. William Cooke, Dean of Ely, and there were several children, of whom Tom, the eldest, seems to have been an especial pet with his grandfather.

In the account-books, of which there is from now onwards an almost complete series down to the date of his death, gifts to the children appear on every page, with frequent alternations of "Went to Combe Royal" and "P. J. & Mrs Taylor & the Dear Children here." No further than the third page of the first book, however, faintly underscored and slipped in surreptitiously between the entries "Bill for Horse, London Inn o. 14. 6" and "Gave Will Coase o. o. 6" is one for July 17th, 1784: "*Began to pull down,*" which evidently means that the rebuilding of Ogwell is again going forward.

It was still unfinished when in 1794 Thomas handed it over to Pierce Joseph, together with the farms belonging to it; and the younger

household removed to Denbury pending its completion. Housekeeping with "Grampy" does not seem to have proved an unmixed pleasure, and it is with a sigh of relief that Charlotte takes possession of Ogwell, "papered and painted at last," only to find that a public road runs past, separated by so low a railing that she is to have the company of all the village of Denbury in her garden walks, and be stared at by every visitor to the kitchen when she is at breakfast.

In his renewed solitude at Denbury Grampy seems to have fallen more and more into the habit of confiding to commonplace-book and account-book the little memorials of the past that received perhaps scant attention from any other audience—anniversaries that meant much to him; the difference in the price of oats fifty years ago; the "minionet-seed" brought by Sir Joseph Yorke (afterwards Lord Dover) from the Low Countries and given him as a great rarity by Kitty Talbot in 1748, now "as common as a Weed everywhere"; and a list of the names of his Hackney school-fellows, scored out, with the exception of two or three surviving. There are some surprising entries in the account-books, such as the payment to Betty March of sixteen years' arrears of wages at £4 10s. a year, ten

years' arrears of wages to the workmen at Ogwell, and a credit entry turned debit: "Gibbs of Dartmouth paid me for Timber & my Son had it 42. 14. 0." Pierce Joseph no doubt was bringing pressure to bear in an effort to clear up the tangle of his father's affairs.

It was perhaps at this time also that the old man began sorting out and tying up his correspondence, fondly if incorrectly noting, "The first Letter I ever writ," on a little sheet of paper addressed to his father from Cuddesden that begins:

"Hon^{red} Sr

The Multiplicity of Busine^{ss} has hindered me from writing to you untill supper is just comming upon table," while the details of the "Business" are characteristically left to be filled in by Kitty Talbot.

Arthur Holdsworth was dead since 1787, to Thomas's lasting sorrow, but his son Arthur was Governor of Dartmouth in his stead, and there was a third generation at Widdicombe to welcome the great-uncle whenever he made his way there. But Grand Juries and Quarter Sessions were becoming onerous duties, and failing health restricted his visits more and more to the immediate neighbourhood of Denbury, and to an

interchange of hospitalities with Mr. and Mrs. Froude.

In 1798 Robert Hurrell Froude, whose parents had long been close friends with Thomas Taylor, was presented to the living of Denbury, and in the following year to that of Dartington, not many miles distant. He dined at Denbury Manor on May 10th, 1802, as Thomas records on the cover of an account-book: "in his Way to Keswick in Cumberland from whence he is to bring a Wife. May every Happiness attend them. Married the 10th of June." Margaret Spedding soon found her way to Thomas's heart and seems to have been kind and serviceable to the old man, for there are many repayments of moneys "laid out" for him in her shopping excursions to Ashburton and elsewhere. William, the engineer, and James Anthony, the historian, were children of a later date, but Richard Hurrell, the divine, born in 1803, must often have been dandled on Grampy Taylor's knee.

Europe had long been at war when on April 25th, 1804, he subscribed "to the cloathing of the Volunteers 25. o. o," and recorded on the 22nd July: "As Tom has much against my Wish chosen the Army I gave him towards his Preparations for his Reg^t 100. o. o."

On July 30th he spent Lord Courtenay's

birthday with him at Powderham as usual, remaining behind the other guests for a last long talk, but on August 8th the words "Taken ill" are scribbled between two items of expenditure, and "Very ill" and "Very bad indeed" follow at intervals. On the 1st December Pierce Joseph succeeded him in the Recordership of Dartmouth, and the entries go straggling on over the next page to the 16th, the last one filled in by his daughter-in-law, who then closes Thomas Taylor's account with the world.

"Mr. Taylor," she writes on the remaining half of the page, "was taken ill at 2 in the Morning Dec^r 29th of this Year, and after a Weeks suffering & being taken out of his Bed but twice—he expir'd at one O'Clock on Saturday the 5th of Jany 1805—had he liv'd till the 6th he wld. have compleated his 77th year."

The Letters of Eliza Pierce
to Thomas Taylor, Esq.
before their marriage.

S^r:

I am oblig'd to you for sending me word of my Uncles safe arrivall at Denbury but he brought the agreeable news of it himself before I receiv'd yours so by that means I had two pleasures at once, one of knowing he gott safe there and the other of his being return'd home, which is always a Satisfaction to me for the House seems extremely melancholly when he is absent.

My Aunt and myself return you Thanks for the Venison which was vastly good at the same time I own I was very glad that you was not here to partake of it for I am told you allways show the Veneration you have for it by eating as much as three or four other people if this is the case (which I am much inclin'd to believe) we should have had but a Small share which would have been a little hard as it was the first we had seen for the Season, indeed I have heard such an extraordinary account of your stomach that I am in some fear for my poor tame Deer least you should take a fancy to cut a slice out of them while they are living if you think you can't resist the temptation I beg you will forbear

going into the park when you next come here. When I last saw you, you told me you believed you should be here again next Tuesday any other day in the week will be more convenient as my Uncle proposes to wait on Lady Chichester on that day, when we sent to inquire how her Ladyship did after her Journey she came to Ned her self and inquired in a particular manner after you, *as when you was at Yendacott when you return'd home how long you staid how your cough was and whether you had lost all apprehensions of a Consumption.* and a great deal more which I have forgott. however these I think are plain instances of her regard for you and as I know you are very fond of Antiquities I think you can't do better then to make your Addresses to her she certainly won't refuse you, if the world does laugh a little at your Choice if I was in your place I should not trouble myself about it you must tell them you was always fond of Curiosities. and for my part I don't see why an Antique Wife for a Young man is not as great a one as an antique Medal I am sure it is more talk'd off & that is the pleasure one have of having any thing different from the rest of the World, I own I am a little interested in giving you this advice as we shall then gain a good neighbour by it which is what we much want in this part of the

World. pray give my compliments to your Sister and tell her I am sorry to hear she takes so much delight in close shady Bowers for tho' her View is then confined I doubt much if she is not thinking of *Prospects* that are at a distance, but I would not have her *think to much* or desire to have them nearer for she will find all prospects please more at a distance then near. I have spun out my letter to a much greater length then I at first intended but I am much the same in regard to writing as I am to talking when once I begin I never know how to have done which I believe you have known before now to your sorrow, but you well deserve to have a long letter of Nonsense for desiring me to write when you at the same time must be certain I had nothing worth writing, but I can't say so in regard to this letter as I have recommended a Wife to you which is a thing of great Consequence, therefore how can I conclude my letter better than in advising you to think Seriously about it—

I am Sir

Your most hum^{ble} Servant

ELIZA PIERCE.

We all join here in Compl^{ts}:
to M^r M^{rs} Taylor & yourself
Yendacott June y^e 28th 1751.

Your account of the dog to me & that you gave my Uncle is very different for he says it is large you tell me it is small besides he says you must steal it, however if the dog is really little & pritty & you'll promise not to bring me in as an accomplice if you should be discover'd, I shall not be so Scrupelous as to refuse it—You can't find fault with this letter for being Hippish but I have gave you opportunities enough to find fault if you are in the Humour for upon reading of it over I find it abounds with what Counsellor puzzle says is the first second & third Qualifications of a Lawyer.

To

*Thomas Taylor, Esq':
at Denbury near
Ashburton.*

Sir,

It is now past nine o'clock and I am in a very ill humour for writing and I assure you are obliged to my Aunt & not to me for this Letter for had it not been for a speech of hers I should not have complied with your request as I think you ought to be so served for asking a question to which you can give an answer as well as myself, for you very well know that

neither the roads nor the weather will premit our Exmouth Jaunt besides we must pay our Visit to Sandford & fulford before we execute that Scheme when we have fix'd the time you shall be acquainted with it either by my self or my Uncle. My Uncle and Aunt are both Yawning and think I shall never have finish'd I myself (as you may find by my Letter) am much in the same condition So for the sake of all four I shall conclude with wishing you much entertainment with your Musick in which I envy you not as it is what I never delighted in, perhaps you will wish for some of it if you should be married to a Scolding wife but I'll answer for it her Clack will out do all which that it may (as I think Women ought to get the better of the men) is the sincere wish of your

humble servant

E: P:

All our compliments, &c.

We have heard nothing of any ffish.

Sunday night. I am obliged to write to night as Ned goes to Exeter to morrow before I shall be up. Though you may imagin as my Uncle was bred a Lawyer I may understand something of the matter yet I assure you, you are mistaken and for that reason

know not what answer to give you in relation to your Estates.

To

*Thomas Taylor Esq':
at Denbury,
near Ashburton.*

Sir,

I have now got almost as violent a Head-Ach as ever I had in my Life and for that reason have been in Twenty doubts whether I should write to you or no but after I had consider'd both sides the question one thing made me determine, which was least you from not hearing from me might conclude we were all dead and so have given yourself the trouble of a ride to know if it was so or no, but I hope if that had been the case you would have found us all well tho' we are none of us extraordinary so at present in particular my Uncle who has been ill with an Inflammation in his throat and face with a great pain on one side his Head ever since you left us I have just writ to M^r: Chute to send him a blister for behind his Ear which he will put up to night so I hope by the time you receive this he will be quite recover'd as I think he is now upon the mending Hand.

I think your expectation of a letter from me

by fridays post was a little unreasonable for I promise you I had no intention of writing to you till I receiv'd yours. that would be acting against all rules indeed, & I assure it is not a part of my *female Oeconomy* tho' perhaps it may be of *yours*. You had no occasion to have given yourself the trouble of sending the two last Volumes of D^r: Young as I have got them myself besides I have often heard you say that no one ever understood them therefore what could induce you to send them to a poor weak woman, it certainly must be by way of ridicule, if I thought so I'd be even with you. My Head my pen & my Ink all three are combined to plague me, therefore while I remain in a tolerable temper I will conclude least I should by making any further use of them loose all my patience & you all Yours.

I am Sir

Your most h^{ble}: Servant

ELIZA PIERCE.

I fancy at the same time you wrote that line of Milton in your letter you was thinking what Mischiefs Women had been the occasion of. I'd have you beware of 'em.

We all join in Compliments to M^{rs}: Miss Taylor & yourself and my Aunt returns you

her thanks for the prints which she has no desire to change.

Yendacott Sunday y^e 11th.

To

*Thomas Taylor, Esq^r:
at Denbury near
Ashburton.*

Sir,

Mr. Gidleys Son being here about some business I have got an opportunity of sending a line to you to inform you that we are all much better then when you left us. we have had the pleasure of Miss Sydenhams company for three or four days this week and I don't know if their enlivening conversation has not been the means of restoring my Uncle to his former health sooner then it might have been otherwise. I assure it is a sovereign remedy and if you had been here I dare say you wou'd have felt no pain either in your Head or Stomach, if those young Ladies should be with me at a time when you are out of order again I will let you know of it that you may try what Effect it may have on you. if you should continue indisposed till Monday and will meet me at Exeter I will introduce you to them for I am of a very charitable disposition and am willing to do all the good I can, if you

have no faith you had best go to Yendacott where I own you do not run the risque of being talk'd to death as you will if you are with we Girls at Exeter & besides you and my Uncle I hope will entertain one another with talking over your Complaints before I come home as I don't desire to hear any of them. I am extremely sorry for poor M^r Ilbert tho', I think M^{rs}: Ilbert is in reallity more to be pittied then him tis true Death is a dreadfull thing to think of and is what must shock all human nature let them have ever so much Heroism or resignation, but still when he dies all his cares & troubles are ended, hers just begin, and terrible enough I think they are for what can be worse then having a parcel of young Children and no father either to take care of their fortunes or Educations with the additional Grief of thinking that in case she should die that then they may be left to the care of Strangers or at least to people that cannot be supposed to have that tenderness & Anxiety for their welfare that parents have and therefore most people are apt to conclude their is not that care taken of them as there should. I declare I don't know a more melancholly Situation and I think was I obliged to take my choice to be in one of their conditions I should be very wavering which to chuse tho' my own sense might easily

prove to me which is the most Eligible. I think I am got into a very grave way of writing which is not very common for me but I han't got it in my power to continue it any longer (which I dare say you are not a little glad of) for Stavy Gidley is in a Hurry to be gone to Exeter. therefore Adieu

E: P:

We all join in Compliments. excuse this Scrawl, tho' now I recollect my self I don't care whether you do or do not—

To

*Thomas Taylor, Esq':
at Denbury near
Ashburton.*

Sir,

I have the Satisfaction of informing you that my Uncle got safe home Yesterday and about half an hour afterwards came the Lambe horse & his brother and I own tho' I had heard but a bad account of him before he was vastly worse then I could possibly have imagined, he is the perfects Trulliber I ever saw and were he my Husband I believe I should order my Hind to kill him instead of a Hog for he wou'd make excellent Bacon. If I was to be try'd for

my Life the Jury certainly would not bring it in Wilfull Murder as I might easely make a mistake between him and that Creature. Miss S: is not at all angry at your wish for she has seen enough of him to give her a Surfeit. I should think my friend must be in great want of a Husband could she bear the thoughts of so disagreeable a wretch as he is. but her sentiments are intirely the same as mine for she declares she had rather die an old Maid (which is what she has a great aversion too) then entertain one favourable thought of him. As you have been in the secret I must beg you will let it remain one still. I am sorry my Uncle & you did not talk over the affair I mention'd to you. as I should have much sooner he had then have left it to me as I neither love to talk nor think about that nor anything relating to it and as he knows my inclinations as well as I do myself he wou'd have been able to have convers'd with you upon that Topick much freer then I can possibly bring myself to, I wish now I had never said a word to you nor him about it for it has only brought me in to an Inconveniency from which I had much rather be excused as it is a conversation I hate. but what must be must be. so I had as good make myself easy I wish I could be Phylosopher enough to

do it, I am sure it wou'd save me & might have saved me many hours of Anxiety that I have pass'd since I knew you. did I think you wou'd always be the occasion of giving me so much uneasyness, my best way wou'd be to make use of the Garters you gave me, but that is a dismal remedy so I must go on with the rest of the World hoping better days will come if it was not for that Hope the Major part of Mankind wou'd be much more Miserable then they are for where there are almost impossibilities still that remains to comfort them and a great Comfort it is, for was I to give way to all the whims & Megrimms that comes some times in to my Head I shou'd make my self the unhapiest Creature breathing, but I will be ingeneous enough to own that I think I now give to much way to 'em and very often form Bugbears where there is none. I am very much disappointed at hearing your sister has alter'd her intention of coming to Yen: pray tell her from me that when once she has form'd a good design she should never change it with out she can give some material reason for so doing which I beleive is not the case in regard to her coming here. however if she does not retake her first resolution and come with you next week (which we hope will be the case as their are few Ladies who are of the same Mind

two hours together,) we shall depend on seeing her the next time after that you come.

I am Sir

Your most Huble Serv^t

ELIZA PIERCE

All here join in Compliments—

Yendacott ffriday Evening.

To

*Thomas Taylor Esq^r:
at Denbury near
Ashburton.*

Sir,

Mr: & Mrs: Freaque have been here this Afternoon to take their leave of us before they go to their Living of Beaford & as it may be some time before we see them again they made a pretty long Visit so that we sup'd very late therefore shall be oblig'd to make my letter shorter then usual as we shall soon go to Bed, indeed I should not have writ at all was it not for the sake of performing my promise which I should never have made if it had not been to get rid of your importunities for one very often Say things to get rid of a present trouble without considering of the future—

We had a Squire or a farmer (which you please) that din'd with us Yesterday who has

an Estate in your Neighbourhood who one wou'd think had a great regard for you as he drank your health Six or Seven times: but I am very glad you was not here as I believe there would have been some things said that wou'd neither be agreeable to you nor myself, I can't answer how Sincere he was in his wishes for you.

We are all extremely glad M^{rs}: Taylor is so much better & pray tell Miss T: that I am certain she could not find the time Tedious in your absence as she had the happiness of so agreeable a Gentleman as *prospect* to keep her Company. We are all very well & desire our Compliments to your self Mother & Sister & am

Your etc. E. P.

friday Evening.

notwithstanding I proposed to write so short a letter I believe tis as long again as yours: therefore don't say I am Lazy.

To

*Thomas Taylor Esq^r:
at Denbury near
Ashburton*

Last friday I receiv'd both your letter & your billet the latter was much the most agreeable to me as it did not give me so much Trouble as

the former. cou'd you speak to me I know that you wou'd be polite enough to say that you are sorry any of your Letters shou'd be the occasion of giving me any uneasyness, but as I don't love to keep people in Suspence I shall without further preamble tell you that you had put so many Seals on your Letter that in opening it I had the Misfortune of tearing out at least ten peices which I was oblig'd to put in their proper Situation before I could read it. which (you won't be affronted at my saying so) was more pains then it was worth, had this been the case of a letter of mine I am sure you wou'd have thought the same tho' perhaps you wou'd not have had the Sincerety to tell me so, for to expect that from a Man is to believe in Miracles in an Age when they are all ceased. I have a little Curiosity to hear Miss K: T: curious Speech tho' let it be ever so extraordinary it will be no surprise to me as I have been told by people that are very well acquainted with her that it is no unusual thing with her to say things that are out of the common way some Ladies are remarkable happy in that respect. witness M^{rs}: Wise of Totness I assure you their are many of my Acquaintance who are a Match for them. I think we are both much obliged to Counsellor Jeffrey for the regard he professes for us I own

I believe he is very Sincere in his good wishes and that is something extraordinary as the World goes for it is to commonly observ'd that mankind are more apt to pretend to pitty folks in adversity than to rejoice at their prosperity for few you will find do the latter except some people who are greatly above you in fortune (and as they may think in happiness) others generally give some hint or other to make you think that it is not so well as the world reports. I declare I have observ'd this many times myself when the person that says so has known to the Contrary.

I have read S^r. John Denhams Coopers Hill & I have also read the Sophy and it wou'd be a matter of Astonishment to me (had I not seen many instances of the same kind) that a Man could possibly write one thing so well and another so very Stupid for that is my opinion of the Sophy whether I am in the wrong or not I must leave to better Judgment to determine but I fancy it is generally look'd upon in that Light as I never heard before I had the book that there was such a play neither do I believe it is ever acted. this is a pretty good Argument of my side. Miltons L'Allegro & Penseroso I admire as much as you can possibly do, as to the poetry I think there is not much [difference]

but was I to chuse which life I would lead I should certainly say.

Hence loathed Melancholly &c. and farther—

These delights if thou can give

Mirth with thee I mean to Live. I really think I don't show my Wisdom by this Choice for I believe the Wisest Men for the most part are the most sedate but however that does not prove they are most happy and that I think is the most Material point we have to look after. More wou'd find it then there do if they wou'd but seek for it, It is what I am determined to try for & make no doubt of attaining, if you don't take care to hinder it, but you had best be cautious, for I may without any Vanity say that by destroying my quiet you will ruin your own. I may Venture also to Affirm that there can be no true happiness in a Married life unless both partake of it. I fancy you are pretty much of the same Opinion. but people often act against their principles.

As you don't like the usual Begining of my letters I am determined to leave a Blank which you may fill up with what pleases you best, T'will be altogether as well as if I had done it & as to the conclusion (which you begin to be affraid will never come) I shall use the same method you see I will take care not to be found

fault with twice therefore expect to be told no more then that this Letter comes from

Eliza Pierce of Yendacott
in the County of Devon Spinster
which is good information.

We all join in Compliments to your self M^{rs}:
& Miss Taylor.

Fido sends his Respectfull Civilities and thanks you for his Collar & will do it in person next Wednesday when we expect to see you if you don't go to the Moors.

Nov^{br}: y^e 17th 1751.

To

*Thomas Taylor Esq':
at Denbury near
Ashburton.*

Sir,

I have the pleasure of informing you by this Letter that my Uncle is much better & if the regard you so often have express'd for me is real I am sure you must partake the Joy of his recovery with me, we have receiv'd a long Epistle at last from my Uncle Thomas in which he acquaints us that he arived safe home but found Mrs: Pierce Ill in the Gout & immediately upon her recovery was seiz'd with the same disorder him self which was the Occasion of his long Silence, but I am convinc'd he is

now perfectly well or else he wou'd not have had the resolution to have Scrawl'd so long a Letter.

In answer to that part of your Letter where you say that you hope I have both forgave & forgot the Genteel Speech you made of me I can only say that I have done the first, & as to the second it lies more in your breast than mine to determine whether I shall or not for if I find your Actions don't Corrospound with your words I shall look upon it as an inadvertent speech but should it (as my fears sometimes make me suspect) prove to be your real Sentiments I shall often have reason to repent of my Credulity in believeing a few speeches which you men Generally have the Art of making to deceive our Sex. you have most reason to be concern'd indeed if it was spoken inconsiderately (as I am desirous of thinking) or not, as it made you appear mecenary to a great degree & excessive weak not to be able to keep your own Counsel in an affair which was more for y^r: reputation to be concealed but I'll say no more as I am certain the Subject is disagreeable to us both but I have begun, & it has driven all other Topicks out of my head therefore for our Mutual ease I shall conclude with assuring you that I am

Yrs &c. &c.

ELIZA PIERCE.

We all join in compliments to your self Mother
& Sister.

30th Nov^{br}: 1751.

To

*Thomas Taylor Esq^r:
at Denbury near
Ashburton.*

Sir,

I wish I could return the Compliment that you begin your Epistle with by saying that it is always a pleasure to me to inform you of my welfare but was I to say so you wou'd scarcely believe me, as you have often heard me express a dislike to writing you'll think perhaps I now tell you of it again to make you sensible of my Good Nature in complying with your request by Answering your letter to-day when it is much against my inclinations, this no doubt enhaunces the value of my letter, and I wou'd have you believe this is the reason, least a vainer imagination should get possession of your Thoughts & you should fancy that my dislike to writing proceeds from my desire of having your Company when you know there wou'd be no occasion to put myself to that trouble & when I tell you that if it was not for a little *Small Beer* I don't know

how I should keep up my Spirits in your Absence you certainly will be confirm'd in that Opinion.

The Captain has a fine day for going over Halldown but before you receive this Miss T: & myself will be out of Doubt whether he goes or no I am pretty well assured in my own Mind how it will be but I dare say M. T: Heart is going pit a pat (while I am writing this Letter) between hopes & fears she like Siseras Mother is looking out of the Window & saying (*why are his Horses so long in Coming where tarry the feet of his Horses*) but I wou'd have her consider the frosty weather and conclude (if he does not come) that y^e Horses feet are fasten'd upon Halldown so as not to be able to go one step further if this should happen let her consider that it is the Gods decree and not the Captains inclinations that was the Means of disappointing her, but I think so ominous a protent ought to make her determine never to think of him more and I believe she can easily resolve on that as I have too good an opinion of her Sense to imagine that any Man with whom she has so little acquaintance as with the Captain should be capable of giveing her a Moments Uneasyness.

I am sorry you should have sent Tacitus to me as I think it was as safe in your Custody as in mine & it does books an infinite deal of Damage

to send them from place to place you might as well have let them continued in the same situation till I came to them as have sent them here as I suppose I shall one day or other put them— & myself too, in your possession tho' in answer to you I must tell you that I have no great wishes that the time was come neither have I dissimulation enough to say that I shall be sorry when it is. I think I am guilty of no breach of Modesty to make this Confession, it is what I am sure you thought before and if I could not own it after having been so long acquainted with you I certainly could not have regard enough for you ever to think of being Married, without being Miserable, and what so Miserable as either a Man or Womans Marying a person they have no regard for. I read last night four or five letters of M^r: Blackwells but after what you have said I must be silent in regard to my opinion of them, tho I think y^e 13th notwithstanding the beauty & Elegance of the thoughts & diction is very plain to a common understanding but I reckon it is in regard to the Mythology (which that letter has nothing to do with) where you say it is too abstruse for Women, in regard to that Lady that first read it to you, if I guess right she is as much superior to me in Understanding as (I may say it without your

takeing of it ill) M^r: Blackwell is to you for perhaps there are not twenty Men in Great Britain that have so much Learning Judgment & Elegance in writing as he has nor twenty Women capable of Understanding it like Miss Talbot who I suppose is the Lady you mean. My Aunt has been exceeding ill in the Rheumatism all last night but to day is much better all else are very well & join with me in Compliments to your self & all with you. My Uncle designs to defer his going to Exeter till he sees you for what reason I know not, but tis nothing I believe of any great Consequence. my pen is so exceeding bad that it obliges me to conclude before I design'd for I actually Intended to have fill'd three sides of paper tho, I believe my letter now is full as long as yours, & perhaps longer then you desire therefore Adieu jusqu'au revoir.

ELIZA PIERCE.

Decbr: y^e 14th. we shall Certainly remember & drink Miss Taylors health after Dinner and I hope she will see as many of these Days as she desires, I also congratulate M^{rs}: Taylor & your self on the same occasion as it must be a great Satisfaction to her to have so fine a Girl for her Daughter

& you for your Sister who is arived within
one year of being a Woman.

To

*Thomas Taylor Esq':
at Denbury near
Ashburton.*

Sir,

I am sorry that you should have given
your self the trouble to send here on purpose
To inquire after our healths as you might have
been certain we were all well as you heard
nothing from me. Therefore for the future in
case I dont perform my promise conclude it is
oweing to Idleness or something of as little
consequence. but I should have answer'd your
letter had I received it on Wednesday but I had
it not till Late friday Evening. My Uncle is
much obliged to you for your Compliment &
hopes by next Wednesday to be able to hold out
his right hand to you tho, he has not been down
stairs since you left us: We all join in wishing
y^r: self M^{rs}: Taylor & Miss Taylor a happy
new year & hope you have pass'd your Xmas
with more Mirth than we have I am

Yrs &c

E. PIERCE.

I have heard nothing of any parcel left for me
at the black dog. Sunday afternoon.

To

Thomas Taylor Esq^r.

at

Denbury.

Monday Night 10, o'clock.

Sir,

You see by my writing this letter I can sometimes do better then my promise tho' you often accuse me of breaking of them however I cou'd not refuse giving myself and you the pleasure of informing you that all at Yendacott seems to bear a more pleasing Aspect then when you left us but my Aunt has been extream ill both Yesterday and to day but now we hope the worse is over and by the time you see us I make no doubt but she will be free from pain and in good Spirits. Miss Savery's Sore throat is so well gone off that it enabled her Yesterday to walk with me [to] Church and back again and to day we took a Walk of near three Miles before breakfast I beg you will never more have the Assurance to call us Lazy Idle Girls as I believe it is more then your Worship can say you have done for these many Months past, tho' I will have ingenuity enough to own that

I fancy it will be some time before I undertake such another Expedition for I have tir'd myself to such a degree that I can hardly walk over the room, and when I am obliged to Move I am a sort of Echo to the Groans of my Aunt & Uncle so that if we all happen to Moan together we make such a Consort that I defy you or any one that hears us to help Laughing which is a more agreeable Circumstance than ever I met at any Consort in my Life. I know you must think me a Stupid Creature for that last Assertion & least I should give you farther Offence I shall conclude with telling you I am very Sleepy so of Course very Stupid therefore make some Allowances for this Nonsense from

Your most hble Serv^t:

ELIZA PIERCE.

To

Thomas Taylor Esq^r.

This—

To be left at the Black-Dog till call'd for.

Sir,

Here is M^r: Sargent M^r: Gidley & M^r: Triste so I have just stole away from the Noise of hearing deeds read to comply with your request and am sorry I can give you no better

Account of us for my Aunt has been so ill ever since you left us that she has slep not an Hour My Uncle is much the same & my Rheumatism is something better, My Uncle returns you thanks for the Table &c. if I write any more your Man won't get home to night therefore Adieu

E. PIERCE.

all Compliments.

Saturday 5 o'clock.

To

Thomas Taylor Esq^r.
This—

Sir,

My Uncle is now reading Amelia to my Aunt & Miss Savery so I have taken this opportunity of writing a few Lines to you according to your desire I assure you I don't deprive my self of any Entertainment on that Account for I think to hear that History a second time any one ought to have more patience then I am Misstress off and if M^r. ffielding wou'd follow my Advice he w^d: leave of writing of Novells as I believe no performance of that Kind will ever equal Joseph Andrews & Tom: Jones, who ever has read those two I am satisfy'd Amelia must appear very flat, and M^r: ffielding I am affraid is like some other great Genius's Viz, does not

know when to have done. I wish I could give you a good Account of the sick folks but I assure you my Aunt is rather worse then better for y^e Rheumatism torments her so all Night that she scarce Sleeps a Wink from the time she goes to bed till she rises My Uncle I thank God is pretty well and as long as he continues so I shall be able to Keep up my Spirits what else so ever I have to Vex me, While he lives I shall have the Consolation of thinking I have one friend but when he is gone where shall I find one. I am sure I know not and believe no one can direct me, but I hope it will be many many Years before I shall find I have Occasion to seek for another, but when ever that Misfortune happens I must not expect to meet wth his fellow, for I have often heard it said that one sincere Friend is as many as can be expected in the Course of our Life Therefore I never will flater myself with meeting another tho I believe I have been weak enough to have had some such notions before now. I hope you won't imagin by what I have said in regard to my Uncle that I am the Least Melancholly if you do you wrong me for I assure y^o I was never in better Spirits in my Life and what will surprize you more will be my telling you that it is oweing to these very thoughts that my Spirits keep up

as well as they do for was it not for the consideration of his friendship I may say his paternal Affection which I have so often experienced (and without which I believe I should have been one of the most Miserable Wretches breathing) and knowing that it will never be in my power to make him any return Adequate to his favours. I say was it not for these thoughts I won't Answer, but that my being confin'd upstairs without hardly seeing any Creature for so long a time might make me a little dejected and uneasy but now it is quite otherwise and I never was more Chearfull in my Life and I believe I may say with great Sincerity I am never happier then when employ'd about Him. indeed I should be very Ungratfull did I not think so but I hope that is one Vice which even my Enemies won't Accuse me of, it is a Vice that no one who is possessed of an Honest Heart can support the thoughts off, such a one I hope mine is, Gratitude I think becomes the mouth of everyone but Husbands Wives & Lovers but when they make use of that word it looks as if their Actions were to be imputed to the desire of doing what they *ought* more then from a real pleasure in obliging that *person who they think perhaps* they love because they *may have obligations to them* but I'll answer for myself that a man might confer

the greatest favours on me and Yet tho' I might be gratefull even to Lay down my Life for his sake, Yet still I might not be able to love him as a Husband. I only mention this to show that Gratitude alone is not enough to make the Mariage state happy there must be Affection to mixe with it and then I will allow that Gratitude will with a Generous Mind make the felicity Greater. However it is a word that should be seldom or ever used by those three Characters I mentioned as I think it is an indication of too much indifference. my pen is so bad I am obliged to conclude which I assure you in the main I am a little sorry for as I was in a good Humour for Scribling Nonsense. you must thank the pen for this Reprieve therefore—

Adieu. ELIZA PIERCE.

all our Comp^{ts}: to yourself Mother & Sister.
Yendacott Thursday Night.

To

Mr. Taylor
This

Sir,

I yesterday writ you a letter and have sent it this Morning with Amelia & several other books to Exeter so M^r. William must take the trouble to go their for them as I must have been

A Conjuror if I had thought of his coming here My Uncle is sorry you should have given your self the trouble of sending here on Account of the Harness as it wou'd have done as well when he next sees you, however he desires you will writ Mr: Talbot that he will have his Harness in the fashion and that his Crest is a Griffin passant, but he would have the buckles round as he knows they are much more Convenient then the Square ones. As to the Colour of the Coach I assure you it is quite indifferent to me but if it was not I think it ought to be left to Mr. Talbot Judgment. My Uncle has but just finish'd the first Volume of Amelia and *he says* he has to good an opinion of your Good Nature to think you wou'd be desirous of robbing two Old Gouty people of so small an Entertainment, I have told him it can't be for your self as you have already read it, he says you might make a good excuse if you had promis'd it even to your *Mistress*, but as you have the first Volume I suppose that will supply your present Occasions

I am.

Y^{rs} &c.

ELIZA: PIERCE.

We desire you to present all our Compliments to M^{rs}: Taylor & M^r Joe:

My Aunt has been pretty well to night
and slept better then she has for some
time past

To

Thomas Taylor Esq^r:
This

I am sorry M^r: Taylor you should think of giving your self the trouble of altering your writing because I said you writ a prettyer hand formerly but I think it is a thing of so little Consequence that it is not worth while to endeavour to change it especially as I can assure you that your letters will always be agreeable to me if they were writ in as bad a Hand as Counsellor Jeffreys tho' I own it wou'd then be the occasion of giving me some trouble as I should be in want of a decypherer to let me know the contents. which perhaps at all times wou'd not be so pleasing. I am sure you will believe me sincere when I tell you that your wishes for our happiness are not more ardent then mine tho' you may have some reasons to be more in doubt of it for notwithstanding your fine Compliment (which I had much rather you had ommitted) I am very Conscious that I have a great many faults which I ought to correct and which I hope both for your Ease and my own I shall. however

we have both of us foibles which we must mutually bear with and learn to forget & forgive, for you I believe wou'd live to be an old Batchelor and myself to be an Old Maid if we did not Marry till we met with a person exempted from all faults, notwithstanding you say I am, I know you think (and with reason) the Contrary indeed I take that high peice of flattery as I suppose you design'd it more as a Sarcasm then any thing Else, I may have in some Measure deserv'd it.

I am extremely sorry to hear that poor M^{rs}: Taylor is so much out of order but I hope to have a better account by the bearer, I wish I could give you a good one of my Aunt but she has been excessive ill ever since you left us and has at last been prevailed on to send for D^r Glass who had her blooded to day and advises her to drink Asses Milk and we not knowing who to apply to better then your self have taken the Liberty to send to you for one. it will be a great satisfaction to us all if you can supply us as by that means my Aunt will be able to begin imediately to drink it. My Uncle desires his compliments and he begs you to send one with a foal not above a Month or six weeks old if you have one of that Age if not as young as you can. I hope M^{rs}: Taylor won't follow my Aunt's example in defering to send for a physician in case she should

continue to grow worse and I really believe for the Generallyty it is the Cheapest to have the best advice at first but let that be as it will I am sure tis the safest. therefore pray Advise her to it. our Compliments attend all with you and I am

Yours Sincerely

E. PIERCE.

Friday 11' o'clock at Night

I did not receive your letter &c till past eight so have not had time to look on any thing you have sent. I like the lace very much but tis Monsterous dear. the Doves have hatched. Pieroit is better. I am affraid *you will* want a Decypherer, but my Aunt is going to bed so I am in a great Hurry. Adieu.

To

Thomas Taylor, Esq^r.
at
Denbury.

Sir,

I receiv'd your Letter so late on Saturday evening that I had no opportunity of Answering it till this day but as it will not suit with our Conveniency to pay the Money to M^r Clarke this week (Luxon having dissapointed us) it is of no great Consequence you no doubt are better pleased with having a letter now then if you had

had one last Sunday as by this means you are inform'd we are pretty well for two days longer then you would otherways have known off. you perhaps will laugh at my Credulity in imagining you have any desire to be Acquainted with our Welfare but if you do so, I beg you will Consider who is the most faulty the *Deceiver* or the *Deceived*. Notwithstanding the badness of your Direction I receiv'd Vertot Works and am oblig'd to you for the Lent of them especially at this time when I want something pour passer le tems & beleive I shall find more entertainment in them then I even did in M^r. Fieldings Amelia. tho' you probably and the rest of the polite people will laugh at the Rusticity of my Tast, but how can you expect a better from A Country Girl that has seen nothing of the beau Monde for allmost 7 Year and when she did was so Stupid as not greatly to relish it. You are Certainly very Lucky or very Unlucky (I can't determine which) in not being able to sell your Estates but I am fully Convinc'd it is not in your power to force People to buy whether they will or no, so you might have spar'd your self the trouble of telling me of it.

Mr. Patch is again a Widdower so that it is to be hoped the Old Dons of Exeter will look Narrowly after their Daughters. it is reported that

in her Illness she beg'd much to see her father which he refus'd, I can hardly give Credit to it as I think it is an inhuman and an Unchristian Action, her Mother was with her all the time which they say was a great Consolation to her. Poor woman, I am sure she wanted some for she has enjoyed but little Happiness since her Marriage. If you cou'd by any Method get me another Seal Skin it wou'd serve to Complete my Saddle therefore do enquire among the Tingmouth people where perhaps you may meet one in which you will Oblige Sir.

Yours Sincerely

ELIZA: PIERCE.

My Aunt continues to grow better. and my Uncles tongue is running so fast that I scarce know what I write therefore excuse all Blunders We all join in Compliments to your self M^{rs}: & Miss Taylor——

Yendacott Feb: y^e 24th: 1752.

To

*Thomas Taylor Esq^r.
at Denbury near
Ashburton.*

Sir,

You judge very right in saying that you believe this bad Weather wou'd not agree with my Aunt for she has experienced the bad Effects

of it to some purpose we have been oblig'd to send for Dr: Glass who says that she must have caught a fresh Cold whether it is so or no I cant pretend to determine, but I am sure she is much worse than she has been yet having been confin'd to her bed for these three days and when she will get out of it nobody knows but we all hope it will be soon, if it was not that thing call'd *hope* we should certainly be most Miserable Creatures and since the return of my Aunts disorder I begin to lose that happiness which Sweetens most of the Anxietys of Life for I own after a Confinement of three Months without seeing any Creatures except Doctors & Apothecarys and a probability of its continueing as much longer I have not Philosophy enough to keep up my spirits—indeed if it was only to see what pain my Aunt is in (and what Affects me still more) the Anxiety my Uncle is under upon her Account it is enough [to] depress peoples Spirits who are possess'd of them in a much higher degree than I am, tho' I think my Uncle gives himself to much Uneaseness for my Aunts case is no ways dangerous, tho' it is very tedious and may continue a long time. I am sorry M^{rs}: Taylor should have given herself the least Uneasyness about what will be the Event of S^r: D. R: opinion as I think it is of very little consequence

what ever it is. for my part was it in my power to turn the balance of either side by the weight of a Barley corn I am so indifferent that I believe I should be Like the Ass between two bundles of Hay—that is as much as to say that I should live to be an old Virgin before I should come to a Resolution. Pray tell your Sister that I think it very unreasonable that she should Engross two young Gentlemen to herself when some of her Neighbours are in such want, the next time she has two let her send one to Miss Savery who will be infinitely oblig'd especially at this time when we have nothing to divert us but as I shall have nothing to say to Miss Saverys Companion and out of Good Manners must leave them alone (which will make it still more Melancholly for me) I desire she will send me at the same time a Monkey or some other Dumb Animal for my Entertainment, if it is a jointed Babby that I can dress & undress ten times a day it will do full as well as it is only to keep dismal Ideas out of my Mind which croud in pretty plentifully at present as they are assisted by a dark Room and generally by a great Silence, However I am oblig'd to you for most of the Entertainment I have at present for was it not for Books I really believe I should dye of the Hip, and I don't know whether I dont increase it by reading too much for as that is the

only relaxation I have I keep on for four or five Hours together so that when I come to leave off I have hardly Spirits to speake neither have I to continue this letter any longer therefore Adieu.

E. PIERCE.

We all join in Compliments. March 18th: 1752.

I like the buckles much and the Snuff very well tho' I dont take it to be true Strazburg. Pray remember me to your Brother. . . . My Aunt has had some Eruptions about her and since I writ this my Uncle has told me he is affraid she will have a Milleary fever but I believe it is only his fears as she has no other Symptoms of a fever and I should sooner think that the Eruptions will be of Service to her.

To

*Thomas Taylor Esq^r.
at Denbury near
Ashburton. . . .*

Sir,

My Aunt has had an extream bad night and continues much out of Order all this day so I almost begin to dispair of any Amendment and I am affraid that my Spirits instead of brightning with this fine Weather will be so Gloomy that I shall imagin it is as dark and dismal without Doors as I to my sorow find it is within for with

good Spirits Cloudy Days will be spent as agreeable as Sunshine ones but destitute of them the Delightfull Month of May will be as dismal & Melancholly as the dark Days of December—I I assure you Sir I am a little Angry with you for discovering to my Uncle my ridiculous behavior the Day we waited on Lady Chichester for I am ingenuous enough to Confess it was so, however tho' I well deserve his Raillery and every other persons that are acquainted with it you should be the last person that should publish it for depend on it expose my follies as much as you please you won't escape quite free from Censure for in exposing my foibles you certainly cast a Slur upon your own Judgment in making Choice of one in whom you see so many faults; to be in that Character in which of all others you ought to be the most Cautious of Chuseing. Therefore for your own sake don't laugh at my inconsistancys nor reveal them I don't know which way to get you to secrete them better then by making my case your own, but if that won't do I am able to speak as well as *other people* and I am inclin'd to think I cou'd set off *some bodys inconsistancys* in as true a light as he for life can set off mine. therefore beware. don't set a Womans Tongue agoing if you do depend on it you will find it a hard Matter to stop it, and my life for it you will come

off with the wors't of it especially if I have my own Sex for Judges, I am allmost inclin'd to think the Men wou'd give it against you, but I think it is not best ever to let it come to a decision as I believe neither party wou'd gain much by it.—It is now late Sunday Evening but I have writ this letter as I imagin I shall be oblig'd to send it early to Morrow Morning but I will Certainly add a postscript to Morrow if I have only time just to tell you what sort of a night my Aunt has had which I pray God may be better then the last, if you are not a *perjury Man* you must wish the same if it is only for my Sake but if you say so I have seen to much of the World to believe you, so after all you may as well be silent as no Man shall ever gain any Credit of me by fine Speeches so that my Lovers have no occasion to Study rhetorick as all their Eloquence will avail nothing with me; If you are as Sleepy when you receive this as I am now I am writing of it you will be very glad when I come to a Conclusion which I now do for my own sake & not yours therefore Adieu jusqu'a demain.

ELIZA: PIERCE.

My Aunt is just going to take a Composeing Draught. they all desire their Compliments to your self M^{rs}: Taylor Miss Taylor and M^r: Joe:

Monday morn:

My Aunt has had a very good Night but I believe she may thank the opiate for it I wish to God she was well for if she is not soon I am sure I shall be ill.—my little Nursery thrives very well and I hope he will be able to pay his compliments to you when you see him,—pray send me peter as soon as you have any Conveniency.

Adieu.

To

*Thomas Taylor Esq':
at Denbury near
Ashburton.*

Sir,

I have the pleasure of informing you that my Aunt came Yesterday down Stairs and bore it very well she has had a good night without taking any Opium so I hope she will now soon recover Strength as she has such fine weather to help her—I shall say nothing of myself as I can say nothing good and it certainly wou'd be impertinent in me to trouble a Young Gay Gentleman with my Complaints, whose thoughts no doubt are much more pleasantly imploy'd and as I can write nothing to Entertain you, you will excuse the Shortness of this Epistle as it is to

spare you from Melancholly reflections that
makes me assure you so soon that I am,

Yours most Sincerely

ELIZA: PIERCE.

We all desire our Compliments.

Wed: Morn:

To

Mr. Taylor

This

Sir,

You must expect but a very short letter from me as Mr. Chute is in a hurry to be gone and waits intirely on my Account, he lay here last Night and is to lye here again this Evening, however I have the Satisfaction of acquainting you that my Aunt has had a pretty Good Night after spending a most Miserable Day, but we are now in hopes the pain in her Stomach has quite left her but it is by way of Caution that M^r: Chute returns as when she is in pain we know not what to do with her—the Money will certainly be paid to Morrow and the Sooner we get rid of it the better as it wou'd be a great Temptation to Rogues was they to know of it and it is almost impossible to keep it an intire Secret therefore do come for it as soon as you can, My Spirits are something better then when you left me but

I am far from being quite well, We desire all our
Comps. may be made Acceptable to your self y^r
Mother &c. and I am

Yours Sincerely

E: P:

Monday Morn—excuse this Scrawl—

To

*Thomas Taylor Esq^r.
at Denbury near
Ashburton.*

Sir,

I have but just time to tell you that
Borrows has been here with three Horses there
was a bay Mare which he ask'd 16 Guineas for
that made a very pretty Appearance but My
Uncle upon trying of him found he had no Spirit
and was also affraid of his Eyes—he offer'd 12
Guineas for a bay Horse which wou'd be fitt for
a Servant & he believes you may have it at the
fair for 13, where you will have an opportunity of
pleasing yourself as he brings 12 or 13 Horses
with him but I imagin these were the best but I
hope you will meet with some that will be agre-
able to you as I think those you have at present
are very much upon the Scrubado order. I
thank God we are all pretty well and as this is a
letter about Horses you must not expect that I
shall mention any meaner Subjects. I am

Y^{rs}: E. PIERCE.

all comp^{ts}:. the Horse that my Uncle bid Money for butts before, which he says is a very bad fault and the only one he sees in him.

28 April.

I dont know what I have writ there are so many people talking.

To

*Thomas Taylor Esq^r: at Denbury
to be left at the Sun*

*In
Newton-Bushell.*

Sir,

I really now do begin to Lose all Hopes of seeing my Uncle & Aunt well both together tho' I see they can be sick at the same time for my Aunt is now violent ill in the Rheumatism & my Uncle confin'd to his bed in a Swell'd throat & face which I take to be the same disorder that he had the latter End of last Summer therefore the best thing I can advise you too is to give your Horses a Summers run or if you are in a Hurry to be Married look out for a Wife as I believe it will be some time before you will have the Honour of Calling me by that Title, tho' I joke with you I assure you it is with a very heavy Heart which I eas'd in some measure this Morning by a plentiful Shower of tears and if you do but consider the long Confinement we have already had

& a probability of as long a one to come you won't wonder at its depressing the Spirits of a young Lady who is no way inclin'd to a Monastick Life. —I wou'd not willingly detain your Servant any longer therefore excuse me if I add no more then Compliments to your self M^{rs}: & Miss Taylor & M^r: Joe and I am

Yours Sincerely

E. PIERCE.

Thursday y^e last of April—I expect to see no
May this year.

To

Thomas Taylor Esq^r:

According to your desire I have taken pen in hand to tell you that I have been very well ever since the Morning and I assure you I am in hopes of Continueing so without the help of Doctors or Apothecarys— We have as yet seen nothing of the Serv^t: but if he should come I'll send a Line by him to let you know of it if you don't see him to Morrow you had best make farther Inquiries— M^r: Gidley Dennis & Luckett &c have disappointed us to day and appoint Wednesday for Executing their deeds which my Uncle has consented too, he says it may all be done that day provided they keep their promises—What a Number of difficulties lie in our way but I hope

we shall be free of them at last: I am call'd down
to tea so have only time to add that Let what
hinderances soever happen I shall be

Sincerely yours,

E: P.

6 o'clock excuse this hideous Scrawl—Compts
to all.

To

*Thomas Taylor Esq':
at Denbury near
Ashburton.*

The Letters of Eliza Pierce
after her marriage to
Mr. Thos. Taylor in 1752.

*Miss Talbot
to M^{rs} Taylor
after her visit
to Cuddesden.*

You have frightened me my Dear Mrs Taylor by saying so many more fine things than I deserve & *disqualifying* yourself at such a rate Oh dear Oh dear how shall my poor wooden head (for such it has been very particularly ever since you left us) dictate any thing worthy of a Lady so *Speechified* or that can tolerably keep pace with the Compliments of a Lady so *Speechifying* So what expedient do you think I have fallen upon? Why to run away from my self as far as I can, & write to you in the *mad-headed* way of your friend Charlotte G. By this mean you see I can split the Correspondent & claim letters equally from you and your good Man. You shall write to the rattling Charlotte, & he to the sober-sad Kate. Indeed she has been too sad for some weeks past to be tolerable Company even to herself. Yet she thankfully received your kind Advice, acknowledged it to be very wise & seasonable and has endeavour'd she assures me to follow it—Endeavour'd but how? Not as one ought to follow good Advice full Gallop over Hedge & Ditch without once looking behind

one, but stealing along a Snails trot, & stopping every minute to parley with her wayward fancies. Parlying with a temptation how dangerous! Every one has its plausible Cant, every one its bewitching disguise, & one fancies one is very laudably following good Nature, Compassion, Reason, Friendship, till all at once one is stuck fast in a Slough an hundred miles off from the road one intended to have kept. To be cautious in making a Resolution & obstinate in keeping to it is the only rule. But how does this sad Kate practice the Rules she gives? Many a Morning might you, with a shorter Telescope then shows one the people in the Moon, have seen her riding very briskly in gay Sunshine through a Flowery Field determined to be as chearful as the Scene around her, & the next Minute, from some foolish Connexion of Ideas that she was not aware of, her Face cover'd with Tears so that she could scarce see her way. But now she is really better. Not that any length of time she says can efface a Remembrance which will ever be most Dear & Valuable to her, but that Reason & Duty (& a little touch of Experience too for we all want that Teacher) have taught her not to play with edged tools any longer. Do you think even your Marmouset when it arrives and has been a few years under

your tuition will ever learn that lesson till it has had the satisfaction of two or three cut fingers? Well but take Care of the Marmouset I charge you, & let it be received in all due form & in a proper place, & not among your Chickens at Denbury. You cannot be there still to be sure, so I will e'en direct this to Uncle Selbys, & if you receive it there do not fail to give my love to him unsight unseen.

And now I will take your letter to pieces & answer it in order.—Fie upon it, I stumble over those Compliments again. *Lady who has the talent of writing* for writing read scrawling—well, why if I may believe your good Man you have that Talent in perfection, so pray do not wrap it up in a Napkin but let me hear from you as often as it is good for you to write. *Vast Civilities*—yes to be sure it was very good of us not to beat such a cross creature nor to turn such a tiresome Companion out of Doors. But do not take those immense Civilities all to your self Child, had you been ten times worse than you are we were prepared to love you for your husbands sake,—what we do now for your own I am not bound to tell you. Certain it is that we have wished you back twenty times, & that had it not been for the little Marmousets sake you would not have got away so easily.

You wished you had never seen us forsooth. Now out of a Spirit of Contradiction am I heartily glad that we have seen you, & why? because I hope we shall often see you again, & that every meeting will be happier than the former. How many pretty Fields & Views have I to shew you, when you are in a situation for scampering! How glad should I be to scamper with you in Devonshire! Nay I believe I should love You even in London which is saying a great deal I can tell you, for few are the people that London does not spoil.

I will be sure to say all manner of civil things from you to Miss Smythe. She is expected home this week. We shall need her. The Berkeleys are just leaving us—for how long & for a place how distant I scarce dare allow myself to consider. Melancholy thoughts that do ones self harm and no body else any good must be thrust out of ones Mind by Head & Shoulders. But they are good and amiable people, & that one knows such is a pleasing subject of thought be one parted from them ever so far. One can imagine them happy and diffusing happiness round them to their families Friends & Acquaintance, & to please themselves with such Scenes my thoughts shall often wander into Ireland & Devonshire. I must end my Letter Dear Mrs

Taylor more seriously than I began it and assure you that to hear of your happiness will always give me the truest satisfaction, & that I am very earnest in begging you to take care of yourself, preserve your health and keep up your charming spirits, laying quite aside every fear & anxiety which your present Condition may tempt you to. If Sir Thomas writes me that you are well, boys & girls are extreamly indifferent to me, & We shall all of us be impatient for the good news. The sincere Affection you have for one another will sufficiently ensure your happiness, tho every new tie of tender affection will encrease it : And if it is as great as I wish it nothing will be wanting that this World Can give you both. My kindest Compliments to him, & the B^p of Oxfords & Mamas with every sincere good wish attend you both. Adieu, forgive this strange idle letter which I writ partly to cheat my self into better Spirits, & believe me my Dear Mrs Taylor to be with the truest Esteem & sincerest Affection

Your Faithful humble Servant

C: TALBOT.

To *Mrs Taylor*
 at Yendacott
 near Exeter
 Cross post
Free Tho.
 Oxford.

From Mrs. Eliza Taylor to her Husband

I receiv'd your Letter from Bath, but by what I find I have no reason yet to wish you joy of the good effects of the waters, for tho' you wou'd fain think yourself better, yet I fancy by your account it is more owing to your imagination, then to any real benefitt you have received; but as you have had so short a trial you must not give up all hopes, tho' I will not flatter you so far as to say I think you stand so good a chance, of finding relief, as you did in the spring; however I shall be well pleas'd to be disappointed in my surmize.

It really surprizes me after what you have repeatedly wrote about the purchass of the Estate of Efford, that you should now again raise objections. I have a letter now by me in which you write these words "I have wrote to Mr. Glubb, and offer'd 650 £ for the Estate, but if this is not accepted, I will close with him for the remaining 25 £, which is now all the difference between us" what in the name of goodness can have alter'd your resolution in so short a time? is your Son grown less dear to you, that you now seem to do so unwillingly, what would have appear'd with a better grace to be done with pleasure. you say if it must be done, it must—but why *must*? Surely you must be sensible it is for your Sons interest, and let that therefore

induce you to it, tho' it may be something against your own—you say “ *We* shall by this means sink six hundred pound, which otherwise we could have the income of—by *We* I suppose you include me—but I know to my sorrow that I should not have a penny more or less by the sinking of this sum,—indeed I am destined never to have the enjoyment of what I have even a natural right to. I am obliged to be contented with knowing I *once had*, and thinking (but this prospect is far of) I again *may have* a fortune but at present not a penny for me but if this is my fate I know no other way but to subscribe to it with chearfullness & resignation, I am got into the net of Matrimony, and the more I flounce, the more bruises, & Blows, shall I have ; however let me tell you that my knowing I shall have no benefitt by this 650 £ does not at all influence me, in desiring you to buy the Estate ; for I declare I have so great a regard for my Son, that if you would this moment, make the addition of the interest of that Money to my income, (instead of laying it out for his benefitt) I would not accept of it—and yet the heart in spite of Religion & Phylosophy does sometimes rebel at the thoughts of living for ever, on fourscore p^d: a Year—I say *for ever*—you best know whether you design it to be so, or not—at least while you live you are master of my fate.

I am sorry to hear that Miss Savery looks so ill, & rather surprized at it, as of late she has not wrote a tolerable account of herself—I own I cannot see the benefitt than can accrue to her from Bathing, unless as you say to weaken her—but it has been her fate always to be led by the physical tribe and they will lead her to the grave—it is true we must all go there, but I own for my part I should like to be led to it in a more agreeable manner—not that I (tho' perhap I am peculiar in my opinion) think her in any immediate danger of death, as she has no inward decay, she may hold on for some time in the way she is in—but was I in her condition, I sh^d. be glad of an Exit—As you ask me whether I want any thing at Bath, I must for answer tell you a thousand—can you wonder at this as I am a Woman—but as you may not be able conveniently to purchass so many, I shall confine my desires to a pair of Stone Buckles, which if you will bring down with you shall be wore for your sake by

Your faithful

ELIZA TAYLOR.

No Clothes from Denbury

No Letter from Piercey.

Yendacott Nov^{br}: y^e 1764.

To *Thomas Taylor Esq^r:*
at M^{rs}: Collins's in the Church Yard
Bath.

Sir,

I should have answer'd your Letter sooner had I not been pretty well employ'd last week on account of one of our Maids having the small Pox, who died Friday Evening, and unluckily at the same time the Housekeeper was confin'd to her Bed in an inflammation; so that both myself & my *Wise Maid* have had enough to do I call her my *Wise Maid*, because since the Girls death, she has taken it into her Head that she should have the disorder, tho' she was inoculated about three years ago, and had them very thick. this has provoked me & done me more harm then any thing else, as she wou'd sit like a dead thing, and no reasons had any effect on her,—however she now begins to find nothing really ails her & to move about again as usual—I declare I began to fear what effect the force of imagination wou'd have on her, & am convinced that had she had the least real complaint, or any feverish disorder that the College of Physicians could not have saved her Life, so strongly was she prepossessed she would have the small Pox—it is a most provoking thing that when there is so much trouble in a family people should add to it by such whimseys—I never knew the small Pox so much about or so mortal, hardly a family they get into but lose two or three, I

thank God we have but one more to have them, and as he is kept prepared as for inoculation, we flatter ourselves he will get well through them—I am sure Piercey will be very sorry if does not as he is a great favorite, and always plays with him when at home being near his size tho' four years older—I receiv'd a Letter from that Gentleman (miserably wrote) last fryday to let me know they break up next Saturday when I shall send for him, & hope he will divert me, as we are quite prisoners all our friends about having some one or other in the Family, who are afraid of the small Pox—what a miserable disorder it is to have in the natural way! and who that sees the difference wou'd boggle about inoculation? how happy am I to think that Piercey is past them, but as I tell Molly I did not inoculate him to be afraid of them afterwards—

My Uncle desires me to tell you he is willing the Estate of Efford should be bought in the manner you propose, only the conveyance must be made to him & M^r: Hurrel in the same manner as for the Bickham meadow—He desires me farther to inform you that one hundred pound of Strong's Money is not to be paid till six months hence, therefore you must contract to pay the money about that time—my Uncle has wrote to M^r: Glubb that he thinks 6[£]₅₀ is the full value, and

that as you dont care whether you have the Estate or no, he is perswaded you never will give more for it—I mention this that you may know how to act—Adieu

Yrs. ELIZA: TAYLOR.

My Uncle says it is my mistake it is not to be settled like the Bickham Meadow—but agreeable to the marriage articles first to pay my Uncles Annuity, then to you for Life then for my Jointure &c—I wish to God every thing was once settled as I hate the name of deeds & settlements &c &c &c—but I believe my hair will be quite white first, as it already turns Grey—
Yendacott Dec^{br}: the 3^d: 1764.

To

*Thomas Taylor Esq^r:
at Denbury near
Ashburton.*

Sr:

I should have acknowledged the receipt of your two Letters & the twenty pound before this time, but I spent ten days with my Uncle at Topsham, by which means I did not receive them till my return home last Friday—I find by a Letter my Uncle had yesterday from Miss Savery that you got safe to Bath, where I hope you will find that relief which medicines could

not procure you—as I suppose you have a heart-felt satisfaction, in hearing of any thing that shows either the wit or genius of your Son, (and the pleasure a Mother feels on these occasions is easier felt than described) I cant help acquainting you with the ingenious way the Young Man has taken to beg some money of me—but first I must tell you that for this twelvemonth past he has always wrote a story of a Cock & a Bull, and never given an answer to any thing I mention'd in my Letter—for this reason the last time I wrote to him, I told him that as he never wou'd give an answer to any thing I wrote, I thought for the future, it would be full as well for me to send him a Blank paper, as he wou'd see by the directions it came from me; and that if he pleas'd he might answer them in the same manner—that after we had carried on this curious correspondence for some time, we would publish a Book under the title, of Letters between a Mother and her Son; in which should not be one wrong expression, one word of bad English, nor one false narration and I added to be sure the World would be in vast admiration at our Genius'es.—after this I wrote him a Story of my own invention, applicable to the affair, his answer was as follows—“ Dear Mama—I receiv'd your kind Letter last Monday in which was a Story I like exceedingly,

I intend to publish it in the Magazine, as I am willing other people should have the pleasure of reading your Epistle as well as myself—When shall we publish these Letters between A Mother & her Son? when we do I hope to get a little Money, for I am sure I want some much ” Do you think I cou’d help sending him some? no I am too silly a Mother; I must also acquaint you that I think his hand is much improved, which I hope you will be convinced of when he writes next to you—I fancy this is owing to Coleridges new method of staying with them while they write, for the Boys have a vast awe of him, tho’ he treats them with great gentleness—Coleridges distinction of his apprehensive, and retentive memory is curious, for my part I never knew that learning any thing soon by heart was apprehensive Memory—but I understand what he means & he is right as to the thing though not in the expression for Pierceys retentive memory is very strong, but he cannot learn so quick as many Boys that I know, but perhaps his judgment may not be the less sound for that deficiency—in that respect I think he is neither Father or Mother Child. I have spent my time since I came home from Topsham very disagreeably, for what can be more so then seeing distress?, Mr: S: of Slade has at last left his home, for fear

of being sent to that place where imprudent people often do pennance for their folly, and has sought an Asylum in our house, which my Uncle has generously granted him, tho it is not so much for his sake, as it is for his Wife & Children's indeed he deserves nothing being in my opinion an unworthy Creature, who rejoiced over the Misfortunes of others, he has insulted me more then once—but I forgive him, & cant help pittying him in his present distress'd situation, but this is oweing to my Nature more then my reason, for that tells me he deserves it all, but my pittty is mixed with some degree of disdain, for he is as abject & as mean now in adversity, as he was insolent, and unfeeling in prosperity—his present distress did not in the least surprize us, as it was a greater wonder he has held out so long, M^r: Burrington & his Brother are going to take the management of his affairs and they hope when all is sold to preserve between two & three thousand pound, for this kind office they expect nothing but abuse, for who of his friends, have not had that from him? I had made a resolution never to have staid in the house where he or she was, but now I think it wou'd be mean to treat him with incivility, tho' no one ever deserved it more from another then he from me—take no notice to his Sister of what I have wrote, nor

indeed to anyone, tho' I suppose it is known by this time all over Exeter, yet I wou'd not have it come from

Your faithfull

E: TAYLOR

I have receiv'd none of the Childs Clothes—for God sake return an answer according to my wishes to M^r: Walter!

Nov^{br}: y^e 11th: 1765.

To

*Thomas Taylor Esq^r:
at M^{rs} Collins's in The Church Yard
Bath.*

Sir,

As I did not write to you last Friday I think it is necessary to inform you that I sent Hurds Dialogues Johnsons preface, & Lowths Letter, that Day by Saunders, the former of these gave me much pleasure in the perusal I own the Dialogue between L^d: Shaftesbury & M^r: Lock pleas'd me the most, tho' I question if that between S^r: Jⁿ. Maynard & c, is not thought the cleverest by those who are competent judges of the subject—but I fear to say so least my approbation should arise from prejudice, to the cause, more then to reason—As for Johnson, I long to beat him, and should with pleasure throw his eight

Vols: at his head—but I dare say the *Censurer* will not be a little *censured*. he certainly takes a pride in being as particular in his opinions, as he is in his phrases.—as for Lowths Letter, you knew my thoughts of it before. the Biographical Dictionary is very well, to take up now & then to amuse an Idle Hour, but I think it is not a Book to read regularly—however it is a necessary Book for a Library—I had a letter last Tuesday from L^{dy} Lisburne to desire I wou'd meet her to morrow in Exeter, and spend two or three day with her at Mamhead as she sets out for London next week, it is not quite so convenient for me, however I cannot deny her, as she makes that to be a proof of our reconciliation, and as she has with *great generosity* declared several times she thinks she acted wrong, it wou'd show but *little* in me was I ever to remember it more—it is an old saying the falling out of Lovers is the renewing of Love, I find it to be the same in friendship, for after not receiving a Letter from her Ladiship for near a twelve-month, I have had no less then six with in this Month—this Month ought to be mark^d: with White by L^d. Lisburne for in it he has been chosen Member of parliament, his Uncle has died and left him an Estate of 1500 £ p^r: Annum, besides a deal of Money—his Father is also Dead by whom he gets an Estate of

2500 p^d: p^r: An: & his sweet little Girls are recover'd from the small pox, the youngest is the greatest Beauty I ever saw—it is L^{dy}: Lisburne herself in miniature—There is certainly something very agreeable, to chat in this Manner with the pen (excuse the expression) about Books & other peoples affairs, but at the same time one ought not to be unmindfull of ones own—I declare I should be rejoiced, was there no occasion, to write on things of more consequence, as I never wish to give you vexation, however my Duty to your Son obliges me to speak sometimes of things I know you don't like to hear and yet in fact your own interest is concern'd as much as his, I mean in regard to the payment of your Sisters Fortune—I never think of it but it leaves a dead weight on my Heart, and I cant help saying that it is a most cruel thing in you to keep runing up the interest as you do—I have heard that your Mother is very fond of her Grandson, therefore wonder she as trustee will suffer such an injury to be done him—and as for your part it amazes me you should not have the laudable ambition, of wishing to be free from all incumbrances it astonishes me what you do with your money you are always boasting of your Economy, but it is only the fashionable Economy that has been talk'd of so much amongst the Great

of late Years; that makes affairs worse instead of better—I know it is presumption in such a low animal as a Wife to expect to know any of these things, therefore desire it not; but for my Dear Boys sake I will be continually teizing you till M^r: Holdsworths Affair is concluded—nay if I cou’d I wou’d have a Starling taught to speak, that in your Ear, shou’d Hollow *Holdsworth*, I shall only tell you now, that I have cried a thousand Tears about it, but I own I do not flatter myself, that this last circumstance will have any weight, tho’ it ought to, (if it was true what you lately wrote) that you had a great regard for your faithfull Wife,

ELIZA: TAYLOR.

January y^e 29th: 1766

Have you heard f^m P.

To

*Thomas Taylor Esq^r:
at Denbury near
Ashburton.*

To Governor Holdsworth

Sir,

I receiv’d the favour of your Letter yesterday and am really ashamed, that I should not have had reflection enough to foresee that you would have had too much delicacy to show my last Letter to M^r: Taylor without my approbation

—but to excuse my self in some measure, I assure you, I thought of it after it was sent to the Post Office, and was vex'd that I had not mention'd to you, that you was welcome to make what use of the Letter you thought proper—I now S^r: declare to you, that so far from having any objection to your showing of it, that I desire you will : and happy shall I think my self, if by that means & your friendly interposition, a finishing stroke may be put to that affair which has given me so many hours uneasiness. You may be certain that what I have ask'd of you is for the interest of M^r: Taylor and his Son, otherwise *I* (who can have no claim to your friendship) should never have presumed to have given you this trouble, tho' shall ever think myself indebted to you for interesting yourself in this affair—I am much obliged to you for the obliging things you say of my Boy, and it is my most ardent wish, that he may always act in such a manner as to deserve your good opinion—and may the hopes that are form'd of him & his little Cousin (who I have heard much of) answer the fond wishes of their Parents. Your kind wishes for my Happiness, hereafter, must not pass without my acknowledgment, but I fear indeed it must be *Hereafter* in the Strictest sense of that word, before your Wishes will be accomplished. That you may

meet with it, in both senses, I wou'd *wish*, if I did not fear that my wishes are contagious, therefore I shall only add my Love to Master Holdsworth, and remain S^r:

Your Most Hum^{ble}: Serv^t

ELIZA: TAYLOR.

Yendacott Feb: y^e 26th 1766.

To

*Governor Holdsworth
at Mount Galpin
Dartmouth.*

Thursday 9 o'clock at Night

Sir

I have defer'd writing till tis late but why or wherefore I did it I cannot say unless it was from want of Spirits, and sure it is no wonder I want them when everything is so dismal both within doors & without, the Rain beating, the wind whistleing, my Uncle groaning, my Aunt sighing, and Piercey peevish with his confinement, and Miss Savery as usual complaining; is it any wonder if I should be infected with so many dismals? I truly am almost peevish my self, and who can I vent it better on then you—for what other reason do we marry, and therefore give me leave to tell you all your arguments about Wilkes are in my opinion very weak, I believe he is no more inspir'd with the noble Spirit of Liberty,

then I am with power to be a prophet, I look on him to be a seditious insolent fellow, who wants to fish in troubled waters, and his Noble patron to be equally as good—I wish between them they may not stir up a civil [war], and then indeed we shall have reason to cry Wilkes & Liberty—not but I am as much pleas'd as you with what happen'd at Westminster Hall, and shall ever revere L^d. Chief Justice Pratt, tho Wilkes & that gang are my detestation—what a pitty is it the Secretaries of state should have acted so precipitately—what an advantage have they given Wilkes? and yet it is said there are like precedents in the Reigns of the two last Kings—ay but the Whigs were in play then, the Liberty of the subject was not to be minded; but now they are out, they'll play the Devil,—and show the World they are Liberty Mad—it has been the case in England before now; to what wicked purposes has that Noble Passion been applied too!—what you write secondly is worse then the first, viz about taking in a Tory Ministry, for God sake because a Mans Grandfather, or Great Grandfather was a Tory, must that be remember'd to the third & fourth Generations—was this a way to make good subjects of them! no, no, but the Truth is the Whigs did not chuse any others should come in for a share of the Loaves & fishes—and indeed in

this the Whigs & Torries are just a like, as they are in many other particulars, for I believe in general they care not who is King, provided they can govern him, for I take that to be the chief Quarrel now—I have something in my disposition (I hope it is a generous propensity) that inclines me to take the *weakest* side, and I fear, much fear that is the K—gs—I therefore pitty him, and think what ever a London Mob may be halloed on to; no wise man will commend the North Britton—tis a monstrous insult to Majesty—suppose John Prince was to tell you you lied—wou'd not you turn him out of Doors, and call him impudent Rascal? I know you wou'd, how much worse is then such Language in a Subject to a King—for in fact it is no better—I wish my Lord Talbot had given you a place, you wou'd then like a true Whig have seen things with other sort of Eyes then you now do! I wish nothing had been said about this Essay on Women as it is likely now to be read by numbers, tho' fit to be read by none—but enough of this subject, I now thank you for Fabricius' Letters. that part about the Kalibalick at Bender & two or three other things are entertaining enough, as for the rest I must own myself not enough of a Politician, nor do I know enough of the state [of] Europe to take any pleasure in reading them—Piercey will be vastly happy

next week as Mr. Savery of Slade and his three Children (tho one is a woman now) are to be with us here, for which reason I cannot part with him till Saturday, John should be here the night before, but if it is not better weather you cannot think of having the Boy without a post Chaise—I had bought him a Coat before I rec^d. your last, he shall bring it to you to be made up you must pay me twenty shillings for it by which I get 3^d., and in the place of it I will give the young Man a New great Coat, to wait on you—I assure you he wrote a long letter to you last Friday, perhaps you have since had it—I think Coleridge is to be vindicated for marrying the young Couple, as the Father authoris'd it openly & the Ladys Mother covertly, which I think was shown plain enough as the young Couple play'd at Cards with her in the Evening & were bedded at her House—but M^r: Y. of Cheshunt (I suppose) must not know this,—for God sake examine your Son as to his lattin, for if he learns not where he is, tis right you should seek out for another School.

Yours

ELIZA TAYLOR

P.'s Duty

To

Thomas Taylor Esq^r.

Letter from Mrs Elizabeth Taylor
to her Son Pierce Joseph Taylor—
then Cornet in the 3^d Dragoons
dated Jany 25th 1775.

Your pen runs too fast my Dear Young Man, in praise of Lord Chesterfield, tho' I do not join with those who damn all his Letters without exception, yet I think there are abundance of things very reprehensible in them—his encouraging his Son to corrupt Married women (for in fact that is the case tho' he softens it by the term of Gallantry), is most abominable, as he must be sensible, That he was inciting him by that action to destroy the peace and happiness of Families—and such advice to come from a *Father* is doubly shamefull—I forgive him every thing he says against our Sex, as I suppose the poor Man was very unfortunate in his connexions, but I cannot forgive him his recommendation of Disimulation indeed it is odious & I should detest a character, that implicitly followed his instructions—all that he says in regard to Les Grace, et les Agrements, I admire greatly, but they wou'd be too dearly purchased with the loss of goodness of Heart—the Graces certainly adorn Virtue, but if I must chuse I had rather have my Son have the Virtues without Graces than the Graces

without Virtues—his Lord^{ps}. taste in literature makes me smile, as it is astonishing he should prefer Voltaires *Henriade* (tho' a beautifull poem) even to Popes translation of Homer, and much more so that he should to Milton—those who understand it, say he writes like a miserable politician; on the whole there are about a hundred Letters I wou'd save from the Flames, and the rest sh^d: go, as containing nothing worth reading, or what is still worse, what is not fit to be read.

I remember Miss Frinsham at School, & am much obliged to her for the notice she took of you, but as she was never one of my intimates, I am much more pleased with hearing of Lady Williamsons welfare—pray let me know whether she lives near Northampton, & how many Children she has & every thing relating to her, as I have a great regard for her—if you see her make her my best Comp^{ts}: and tell her how rejoiced I should be, if ever she puts her Cornish journey in execution to wait on her, as she must come through Exeter, and therefore I am sorry for that ugly *If* she made use of when she mention'd this journey to you—you may tell her *if* it was not for some *odious Ifs* I might one day have a chance of seeing her where she lives; as I love rambling as well as any one—but I believe I am

fix'd to one spot—I am glad to see there is some gratitude remaining in this World, which I am convinced there is by Lady Williamsons kind enquiry after me—she has not forgot the times I have made love to her in the Character of Pyrrhus, Juba, Osman, and even as King Ahasuerus—but those Heroick days are now over, and if I ever have the happiness of meeting her again she must expect to be told in plain downright English, perhaps intermix'd with a little Devonshire dialect that I am heartily glad to see her.

You say there are many agreeable Men in your Corps, with some oddities tho' none so great as yourself—this may possibly be true, as thou art an odd—to be sure—but my Dear Son let me beseech you not to get (as Shakespear calls it) into the Trick of singularity, for if you indulge yourself in it under an notion that people will excuse every thing because you are *Odd*, you will do yourself a great injury, & in the end get yourself thoroughly despised—rather try in all innocent & indifferent things, to conform to the ways of the World . . and as you like L^d: C: so well, study his Letter or rather his Sermon on the fortiter in re, & the Suaviter in Modo—as I think you are by nature too much inclined to the former, endeavour to soften it by the latter—I desire you wont laugh because I write lattin—

you know I have Chancellors & Archdeacons to tell me the English—

Your Cousin Holdsworth call'd on me Sunday Evening in his way to Eton where he & Praed are gone for the last time, he is a very genteel agreeable young Man, I wonder you never think to enquire after him (*Souvenir les Attentions*)—it is unfriendly. I wish you wou'd immediately set about writing to all those Gentlemen who have interested themselves for you and me lately—it makes me unhappy that you do not, as it is not acting like a Gentleman, and it will be ridiculous to defer it any longer—I will excuse your writing to me till it is done, as I shall hear by those you write to in Exeter, how you do—

I desire you will give my best Comp^{ts}. to Major Whyte, and return him my thanks for his last Letter, he has fully satisfied me, in regard to your not coming down, I only wish your Father cou'd be assured that it is from necessity and not from *inclination* that you do not visit your friends in Devon : indeed my Dear it was very giddy in you not give an answer to your father, as to what he said about your coming down, for as he testifies a great desire to see you, you ought at least, to have given some reason why you cou'd not give yourself that pleasure—I believe the Major thinks me a very formal old Woman;

by his last letter I have form'd a notion that he imagins me a grave old Matron in a Cap & pinner, that looks on every word before it is spoke—you *know* he judges right., however you may tell him from me, that however formal & *apologizing* I am, there are many in Devon, that are not so, for I have heard at least a dozen Ladies declare them selves in Love with him—indeed who can help loving a person, who interests themselves in so benevolent a manner for the happiness of those he is a perfect stranger to—if you continue *to be* what the Majors partiality induces him to think *you are* you will make one of the happiest of Women of

Your Affec^{te}: tho' hitherto Unfortunate
Mother ELIZA: TAYLOR

Exeter Jan y^e 25th 1775.

Lady Lisburne & Miss Shafto & Miss Vaughans were to see me yesterday Col: Vaughan has been most amazingly kind in regard to you—I have a thousand Comp^{ts}. for you, you must guess from whom; but Lydy made me promise to mention her—Your Aunt is very ill in the Gout—her love attends you——

The Letters of
Pierce Joseph Taylor,
a boy at Eton.

Friday 4th Nov^r. 1768.

Dear Papa,

I send you this to let you know the Boys have rebelled, and to give you an Account of it—but first let me tell you, I am out of the Scrape I thought the Boys would rebell a week ago for they ran about and hallow'd and made great Noises; the original was Dr. Foster whipp'd Webster a sixth Form Boy, for keeping Noise in the Chapel—to be sure he did make a Noise, but it was in keeping the lower School quiet, which it was his Business to do. He was told of by Mr. Norbury on which the sixth Form gave up their Power (which is to have any Boys flogg'd when they are caught out of Bounds or Keep a Noise in Church, or do any thing irregular) this was done nigh a week ago: the 2^d. of Nov^r: about 10 o'Clock the Sixth and Fifth Forms went to Doctor Foster to tell him on what Conditions they would receive their Power again, he bid them go about their Business for he said he would not be govern'd by Boys, on which the Fifth Form said they would stand by the Sixth and some Fourth Form Boys said the Fourth

Form would also. On this those Boys who were there went all over Eton calling the upper School and hallowing, almost all the upper School came and join'd them then they went into the Play Fields, where most of them flung away their Books (to be continued in my next by tomorrow's Post). Pray send this to my Mama as I am not very well, my Duty to all

P. T.

Eton Nov^r: 6th: 1768.

Dear Papa,

In my last Scrawl, (for it certainly was a Scrawl but as I was much fatigued I hope you will excuse me) I ended with the Boys flinging away their Books in the Play Fields, from thence they proceeded to Mr Norbury's (who you see in my last was the Cause of the Rebellion) he came out and spoke to the Boys who immediately cried out Off Off, and ran away huzzaing and making a great Noise. On which I came out of my Dames to see what was the Noise and join'd the Rebels. We went to Mr. Edwards's (of all the upper School not above ten Boys staid behind) (pray tell me in your next if you do not think I was in the right for going as all the other Boys did?) Rat Tat at his door, Smash at his Windows, go Bludgeons Sticks Stones: I was very

glad his Windows were broke for he is very ill natur'd, and in my Opinion the Man is not fit for a Schoolmaster who says this is not a Verse *Hinc lūchīs et mēntis inēxōrābilīs Aṅgōr*. A Boy of my Acquaintance shewd up that Verse in a Copy of sixty-four long Verses, for which he deserv'd to be sent up *for good* and Mr. Edwards declar'd there was but five feet in the Verse above mention'd. From his House we return'd to Mr Norbury's and in about a Minute afterwards we went to Mr Sumners' who had confin'd Milles minimus. Mr Montagu (who was in a Manner our Leader) flung open the Sash and pull'd him out. Mr Sumner came out and said do you dare to break my Windows. Mr Montagu said yes and broke them immediately, I was sorry for it as Mr Sumner is a very good natur'd kind Man. We then left him and went into the long walk where we met Mr. Edwards, we immediately hallow'd Cat Cat Meow (he goes by the Name of Cat) up Slough Road Off Off, no Foster (we were like the Ephesians about Demetrius hallowing great is Diana of the Ephesians), so we hallow'd no Foster, and three parts of us knew not why. We immediately ran up Slough Road hallowing like mad fellows: When we came to Charvey Stile about a quarter of a Mile out of Eton the Sixth Form call'd over the upper School, who

were almost all present and made us promise we would stand by the Sixth Form till we all dispersed and when they had sent home about Fifty Boys whom they thought incapable of bearing the Fatigue of a March—we all amounted to 170—we march'd two in a rank in Divisions of ten 'till we came almost to Maidenhead; in a Field going to Taplow (into which we had march'd to avoid the People who follow'd us) Mr Roberts overtook us, and made us a very pathetic Speech, which brought Tears into many Boys Eyes; I had not the Pleasure of hearing it. He said he was sorry he had no better Terms to offer than that Dr Foster would take the Sixth Form and punish all the rest with a flogging to which they would not agree. On this we marched on to Maidenhead where we din'd; about 5 o'Clock Mr Roberts came and told us Dr. Foster said he would not take us without Punishment. We supp'd and lay there. I sat up as half the Boys did. Our Reckoning in the morning amounted to Sixty Five Pounds, the gathering amounted to Seventy Pounds, the Five Pounds was distributed among the Servants. After Breakfast, about 7 o'Clock we march'd back to Eton as we came. When we came into the Play Fields the Sixth Form went to the Doctor and said we would all return if he would make us a Promise of

Oblivion, He said No, Mr Roberts took Grenville and lock'd him up, on which we gathered round his House. Mad Montague broke all his Windows, for which I am really very sorry. L^d: Roose was siez'd by his private Tutor, Mr Ekins, who with his Brother hinder'd the Boys from getting L^d: Roose. The private Tutor's Brother on wrenching a Bludgeon out of a Boy's Hand knock'd me down, however I soon got up again. We then went into the Play Fields where we all dispers'd. I and about Thirty more immediately went and submitted ourselves to Dr Foster who said he was very glad to see us return'd and also that he thought most of us who submitted ourselves *then* were drawn on by the others and therefore excused us. Dr Foster has expell'd Mr Montagu, Milles Major, Gally and Lawrence, who boarded at this House. I have not wrote to my Mama, pray write her and show her this which I think is a sufficient excuse for my not writing to her an account of the Rebellion too. Pray give my duty to my Grandmama, who I hope is well as I am, and believe me to be

Your Dutifull Son

P. TAYLOR.

Dear Mama,

I am once more sat down to write I shou'd have wrote you long ago had I not burnt my finger, and since that has been well we have almost half drown'd. I am very much obliged to you for your letter about my Tutor, it came just Soon enough, for I believe my Tutor woul'd had me whipt if that Letter had not come, I will give you the whole affair as it happened, likewise, an account of the flood, and the manner in which I burnt *my Finger*, Imprimis, I went to my T:'s to know what to make my verses about, who said to me Taylor, come in to my Room, on which I went in. Act y^e First, Mr. H: I always thought Taylor had more ingenuousness than to write home a Lie so impudent a Lie what have you to say for yourself, Speak, (Tay'r, myself,) I indeed Sir I do not know what you mean. (H.) You dont know what I mean Can^A you look in my face^A and say so? Young man,^A (Tay'r) 'pon my word Sir I can. I do not know (my Tutor collars me and shakes me) (Tutor) so you stand out in a Lie did not you write to your Father? you was not concerned in the Rebellion, Hay,^A (Tay'r) indeed I wrote home I was con-

AAAA Words much in use with my Tutor (I shall have you whipt undoubtedly, Young Man) is generally my T's expression when he intends to have a boy whiped.

cerned in the Rebellion, (Tut) You lying Rascall (shakes me) I will most undoubtedly have you whipt. I being struck shook and going to be told of for nothing fell into a Passion, which I am too apt to do and Said I dont Lie whoever say I Lie Lies and if you have me flogd you'll tell of me for nothing and repent when it is to late, (Exeo) my T: did not tell of me then but intended to tell of me if he caught me in a Lie.

The next day I received a letter from My Father saying he had received my letter and was glad to hear I was out of the scrape, but said nothing about my writing I was concern'd, when I received your letter I carried it in triumph immediately to my Tutor (Act y^e 2) (Tay'r) Now Sir, I hope this will convince you, he takes the letter and read it, gives it me turns about and cries, Mum, then taking down a book begins to read on which I went out, being questioned at the door by a boy what he said I said, why truly my Tutor said Mum, which I interpreted to be go about your business, so ee'n I turn'd about and walk'd off I think he might have said, Well I am glad to see you have done right or something of that sort but forsooth every thing he says is Mum. I returned to my dames and immediately sat down to Write to my Uncle, just as I had wrote Dear Uncle in comes Amyatt, a

boy at my dames, and Says (Act y^e 3^d) Pray Taylor lend me a bit of Sealing wax I did and he began to daub it and drop it about on the Letter on which I pulled it out of his hand and sayd, Ill show you the way to seal a Letter (and lighting the wax, I burnt my finger and thum). I hope to be able to give you an account of this flood Next Tuesday by word of mouth and believe me to be

Your Dutiful Son

Pray give my duty

to my Uncle and Aunt,

tell my Uncle I am very

P. TAYLOR.

sorry I cannot write

to him by . . .

Eton Sept^{br}: y^e 22 1769.

I am sat down to let you know, my Dear Mother, that I arrived here safe last Night, about 9 o Clock; in very good health, and Spirits, I was highly diverted, on my last Stage, by Mr. Chichester; who abused poor Eton very much, and said he thought it so Childish, that he should be very glad to go away, he could not bear to tell any person he was going to Ee—ton; but always said he was going to Windsor; when we came into Windsor Park, he protested he smelt a Stink; so did I, but he had the Witt to find out that it was the Stink of Eton; I am more inclined to

think he let an . . . &c. . . . I say my lattin task to Morrow I can say a good deal of my Greek quite perfect and hope to be able to say my Lattin by to Morrow at (I do not know) o Clock; when I shall say it with Rous and another boy. Mr. Codrington seems to think there is nothing in my Aunts Coffee water ; and says it is the effect of the Rheubarb, pray give my Duty to my Uncle and Aunt ; love to Miss Kate, who now has no one to romp with and believe me (and I hope you will find me) to be

Dear Madam

Your Dutiful Son

P. TAYLOR.

P. I can say half of my Latin task ; I wish my Father would give me Some good books ; as I have very few, if he would I should take great care of them, and make my Study a little better than it is at present : I will make my study fit for their reception out of my own pocket ; Adieu Xmas is Coming when you will have much of my Company. I shall soon go into the 5th form when I shall have more time to write I promise you I will mind my French, and will attend dancing once in a week constantly and sometimes twice. I shall learn, Latin Greek French Drawing Dancing. I do not like to learn so much as one thing will hinder another.

Nov^{br}. y^e 6 1769

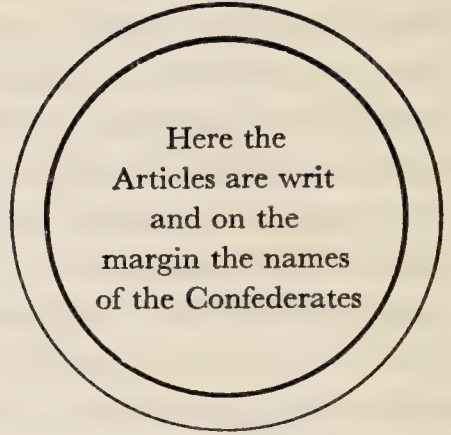
You have often desired me my Dear Mother to intrust all my Secrets to you, I now will make use of that freedom; as I have great reason to expect another open war in defence of our liberty; I mean, I think we have ten thousand more cause now than the last time; I will begin the Story, but first let me tell you I was whipt some time ago for being on a shooting party very deservedly and as boys always are if they are Caught, now let us begin the Story; two great boys was attacked in Winsor and very badly used; doctor Foster punished the boys for being up in Winsor and said he had enquired into the affair and he found the boys had been shamefully used (things were stolen from them) and therefore the man should be punished by the law, however the next day most of the boys assembled and declared they would go and fight the Mob, however they were soon brought to reason by the Assistants and after we had reprimand from the doctor, I thought the affair would be hushed, but in two or three days one Petty being flogged for the Same Crime as I was, (Viz. getting out to go a Shooting, I forgot to mention the getting out before the doors were open) When a Certain Nobleman, (L^d Petersham) hissed, I do not know for what, unless it was to show his folly, the doctor

came in, in a great Passion and cried out; this is the Second time I have been insulted in one week, but some of you shall suffer for it; this happened on Thursday the next day he called up several boys to repeat their Homer to him, a thing unprecedented, and if any boy missed a word I will not say he Whiped them, but he butchered them, he cut one of the boys so who was with me that he was quite raw, he had got his lesson as well as he could I am certain, he is no very bright genius, but He is an honest boy and I am sure he is addicted to no vice, and on my honor was entirely free from any Crime layd to his charge; two devonians were also butcher'd, Acland and Rouse; I know no harm of either of them Rouse was never whipt before, nor had so much as his first fault forgiven, and I think the doctor has as much cause of Complaint against him as he had against the Great Mogul; I said to him amongst the rest; I could thunder out my Homer with as much Violence as he could flog the boys, so he could not whip me; the boy Whom I mentioned who was whipt first (Corbet is his name) going down the School being in a very great passion stamped as he walked along, which the doctor thought an insult on him and therefore I thought he would have whiped him again, but he did not; on Sunday at two o Clock

a Colleger reads some of the Whole duty of man ;
the doctor selected Six boys on pretence of their
having made a Round Robin which was done at
the rebellion

it is in this shape
the names of the Six
were

Anderson
Corbet
Mr. Monson
Best
Petty
South



Anderson immediately denied it, and in reallity there was no such thing, for which he was expelled, he sent the other five out of School I thought would expell them but he did not, in the evening a round Robin was drawn up, but the boys could not agree, the affair is still in agitation and I have a great notion it will not terminate easily doctor Foster is determined to send away all the boys that engage, if there is one I am determined to be in it as well as the rest for I had much rather to be sent away with a great many, than stay here and be butchered like a Slave, this is my fixt resolution.

I had a curious dialogue with my Tutor Yester-

day, Sunday evening, he gave me some very serious advice about this affair, he told me what pain it would give you and my father to have me sent away with ignominy, he then ask'd me what reason I had to care about what Dr. Foster did, I said, some boys have been punished without reason; my Tutor said I had not been, I said, it perhaps may be my turn next, On which my Tutor Said, let that be as it will we will be masters, I said, yes you may be masters but—here I stoped I had almost said not tyrants, I am very well and hope you will excuse my inaccuracies as I am in a great hurry, Pray give my duty to all and believe me to be my Dear Mother

Your Dutiful Son

P. TAYLOR.

Honrd. Sir,

I hope this letter will find both you and my Grandmother well and in good spirits. I am perfectly so and have had a very favourable journey to this place as has my Cousin he also is in a good state both of body and mind comforting himself with the thoughts of reading over Mr. Sleech's book when he says his Greek taske to him, but his Latin which he will say to some other person gives him a sort of a Chollick which causes a trembling in and contracts the muscles of the posteriors. I have just been trying

how the Φ 's and X's and Ψ 's would relish after Woodcock Snipes etc. and find one of the fables of Esop verified (I mean that of the bow which is the better for laying some time unbent) for I think I never got any thing by heart so fast in my whole life, and therefore I have not got that Chollick which plagues poor Arthur. I forgot to mention anything to you about tea and sugar when at home so I have taken the liberty to tell my Dame I was to have a pound of tea and a loaf of sugar at which I hope you will not be angry. I should be much obliged to you if you would send me some books, good ones. I can assure you I now am very careful about them and have had all those which I have torn and damaged before now new bound. I have got Mr. Roberts's poem, I find he intends to publish three numbers of it and this is only the first, when they are all out I intend to have them bound and bring them to you I shall now only add my duty to my Grandmother and that I am Honrd. Sir

Your Dutiful Son

P. TAYLOR.

Jan^{ry}: 27th. 1771

*Thos: Taylor Esq^r:
Denbury Ashburton
Devon.*

DATE DUE / DATE DE RETOUR

TRENT UNIVERSITY



0 1164 0423673 3

